The Journal of Historical Review

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Neither Trace Nor Proof: The Seven Auschwitz "Gassing" Sites

An Official Polish Report on the Auschwitz "Gas Chambers"

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—Reviews—

Never Forget
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Errata:

Please note these corrections of errors in the Spring 1991 issue of *The Journal*: The Birkenau crematory facility building in the illustration on page 72 should be Krema II, and not III as indicated. The plan on page 73 was taken from page 512 of Pressac's book about Auschwitz. On page 82, line seven, the word "has" should be "had."

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From the Editor

This issue continues, and completes, the *JHR's* exploitation of that marvelous godsend from the Klarsfelds and their monied supporters, Jean-Claude Pressac's *Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers.* Pressac's massive study is the first attempt by Exterminationists to come to grips with the Revisionists' technical arguments against mass murder at the Auschwitz crematoria. As three previous treatments (by Mark Weber, Carlo Mattogno, and Robert Faurisson) have demonstrated, however, Pressac's lucubrations have if anything made the Revisionist case against homicidal gassing at Auschwitz more powerful than ever.

In Part II of his review of the Pressac book, Dr. Robert Faurisson concludes his masterful dissection of Pressac's attempts to shore up the gas-chamber thesis. More than just a demolition of Pressac's errors and a harvest of the windfall of the new evidence for Revisionism that the French pharmacist has unwittingly provided, Faurisson's study, which first appeared in the French Revisionist journal *Revue d'Histoire Révisionniste* (no. 3, November-December 1990-January 1991; address: B.P. 122, 92704 Colombes Cedex, France), bristles with new evidence from Faurisson as to what really happened at Auschwitz during the Second World War.

Then Enrique Aynat, who, like Dr. Faurisson, is a frequent contributor to the *JHR* as well as a member of its Editorial Advisory Committee, comes at the Pressac book from a slightly different direction, meticulously analyzing Pressac's evidence—documentary, technical, and testimonial—at each of the seven Auschwitz sites claimed by Pressac and other Exterminationists to have served as homicidal gas chambers. Aynat's study is a concise, state-of-the-art debunking of not merely Pressac, but every Exterminationist who contends that the famous crematoria and the elusive "bunkers" of Auschwitz were used for murder by gas.

As noted above, *The Journal* plans no further studies of Pressac's *Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers* for the near future. With this issue we shall have devoted more than 160 pages to this book, which was hailed by its publishers (and in the pages of the *New York Times*) as definitive, technical proof—at last—of the Exterminationist gas chamber thesis. So far as we have been able to determine, the *JHR's* coverage alone currently exceeds the total space given Pressac's important study in all other scholarly journals combined: an indication not merely of the import of Pressac's book for Revisionism but of the reluctance, if not inability, of Exterminationist scholarship to grapple with the physical and technical properties of the Auschwitz crematoria and their alleged gas chambers.

(*continued on page 176*)

Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers
Or,
Improvised Gas Chambers & Casual Gassings at Auschwitz & Birkenau According to J.C. Pressac (1989)

Part II

ROBERT FAURISSON

The Lessons of a Soccer Field and a Swimming Pool

In 1983, Klarsfeld and Pressac published a French version of the *Auschwitz Album* (published by Seuil).[8] Pressac drew up a misleading plan of Birkenau (p. 43) on which, in particular, he obscured the surroundings of the large Birkenau crematories. Specifically, he concealed from his readers that, immediately next to *Krema III*, there was a *Sportplatz* (playing field) which served as a soccer pitch for the inmates, and that right next to the *Sportplatz* there was a large hospital area. These simple topographical specifications (about which Pressac is rather discreet in his large book) render absurd the thesis that the crematoria were supposedly the culmination of a horrible extermination process accompanied by cries, fire, flames and the smell of burning flesh. Can you imagine teams of soccer players and crowds of spectators at the various matches, just a few steps away from those horrors?

Pressac is careless when he challenges the Revisionists to prove that in the central camp the swimming pool was used by the inmates. I will let a former Auschwitz prisoner answer for me. He was a professor in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Strasbourg who, while affirming in a rather vague way the homicidal gassings at Auschwitz, was just as willing to write about the distractions available to the inmates:

> On Sunday afternoons, there were soccer, basketball and *water polo* matches [my emphasis] to the ardent cheers of the spectators: people need very little to distract them from the dangers that threatened them! The SS administration allowed regular amusements for the prisoners, even on weekdays. A movie theater showed Nazi newsreels and sentimental films and a very popular cabaret gave presentations often attended by the SS authorities. Finally, there was a very creditable orchestra, made up originally only of Polish musicians and replaced later by a new, high-quality group made up of musicians of all nationalities, mostly Jews (Marc Klein, *Observations et réflexions sur les camps de concentration nazis*, taken from the journal *Études germaniques* (No. 3, 1946), 1948, p. 31).

I could cite many other examples of such activities, but I shall refrain from doing so, because where human beings are so "concentrated," life becomes unbearable in spite of all; promiscuity, epidemics, the struggle to live and to gain individual advantage make such an existence frightful, especially in time of war. But we must not add false horrors to the real horrors. Furthermore, the camps run by the Soviets, including the ones they "liberated" in Germany before filling them again with their political adversaries (beginning with the National Socialists), were even more horrible, according to the statements of people like Margaret Buber-Neumann, who experienced them both.

Pressac entitles one of his chapters "Auschwitz According to the Revisionists. Photographic Exhibition of the Famous Holiday Camp, KL Auschwitz" (p. 507). The irony and the slanderous insinuation here conceal his embarrassment at reproducing photographs which are not consistent with the various kinds of horrors supposedly found in the camp. He tries to cast suspicion on certain of these photographs by pointing out that they come from "Revisionist sources." He is obviously unaware that many of them are from the album kept by Dürrfeld, an engineer who was one of the leading executives in the factories at Auschwitz. The file reference "DUE" (for DUERRFELD) ought to have alerted him: the Dürrfeld trial is well-known to historians of Auschwitz, but apparently not to our pharmacist-turned-amateur-historian.

Involuntary Contributions to Revisionism

Here and there throughout the text, one finds information (very often in the form of photographic documents) which

tends to reinforce the position of the Revisionists. Here are some samples:

- The story of one Rablin, a prisoner employed in disinfecting with Zyklon B, proves just how dangerous this terrible gas was to use. Rablin, only slightly exposed to the gas, was hospitalized and took two months to recover (p. 25); it is paradoxical that the Germans tried to cure of gas poisoning a man whom, the story goes, they should have killed with precisely that gas;
- The deposition of inmate Joseph Odi describes the procedure for using Zyklon B in the disinfestation gas chambers, a procedure that has often been described by the Revisionists and that shows the dangers of the operation. Although suitable for clothing, this method would not work with human beings. Above all, the witness reveals that the cases containing the cans of Zyklon B were stored in the *Theatergebäude* (theater building) and that transporting it from there to the gas disinfection gas chambers was done with a Health Service vehicle standing by. The Revisionists know all this, but it is interesting to see Pressac's book reminding us of two points which should help clear both the Carmelites of Auschwitz and the Red Cross of the charges too often made against them. Today the Carmelites are reproached with occupying a place in which the Germans are supposed to have warehoused gas used to kill human beings. In reality, the gas was used to kill lice and thereby to protect human health. The Red Cross vehicle was there to protect against the accidents that were always possible with Zyklon B. It played no role in murder; it, too, was there to safeguard men's health (p. 41); it is noteworthy that J. Odi is precise when he talks about the disinfection gas chambers and very vague on the subject of the homicidal gas chambers; besides, he believes that men were gassed in the disinfection gas chambers!;
- The beautiful photograph showing an impressive complex of eight disinfestation gas chambers in that part of the Birkenau camp traditionally called "the Gypsy camp" (*Entwesungsanlage Zigeunerlager*) contradicts the thesis that the Germans intended to exterminate the Gypsies (p. 63);

- An astonishing photo taken in the *Zentral Sauna* shows a group of naked inmates, apparently in good health, carrying their shoes from a vast shower room (50 shower heads) to the "drying room" on the "clean" side of the disinfection area (*Trockenraum, reine Seite*): an unthinkable scene in an "extermination camp (p. 80; see Part I, p. 26 in *The Journal of Historical Review*, Spring 1991.
- One photograph shows some inmates in their striped uniforms employed in disinfecting clothing in front of a battery of three autoclaves; here the disinfection is done by steam; elsewhere, it may be done by warm air, with Zyklon B, or even with other gases; the true concern of the Germans was to exterminate vermin, not men, by any and all means (p. 82). Enough can never be said about their obsessive fear of typhus; "there were in fact about 25 Zyklon-B delousing chambers of different sizes operating in the camp" (p. 550), and a great number of disinfection chambers that operated in other ways, without using gas;
- A sheet of operating instructions for coke-fired incineration furnaces points out that the furnace fire bars must be cleaned of clinker and the cinders removed every evening; these ovens, Pressac tells us, could only operate 12 out of every 24 hours, not 24 hours a day as claimed by the believers in the extermination myth (p. 136, 224, 227);
- To replace *Krema I*, the Germans had considered constructing a "new *Krema*," to be built a short distance from its predecessor, near the SS hospital and the *Kommandantur*. Pressac acknowledges that this "new *Krema*" had no homicidal gas chamber. He says that the construction was finally transferred to Birkenau and that *Krema II* and *Krema III* at Birkenau were, in effect, replicas of what had originally been planned for Auschwitz I; the plan remained the same. As a result, *Krema II* and *III* were designed *without* homicidal gas chambers (p. 33, 140-143);
- Page 143 is particularly interesting. Pressac sees only inoffensive *Leichenkeller* in this plan, but when the same plan serves for the construction of the Birkenau *Krema*, here he arbitrarily dubs the *Leichenkeller* either

"disrobing rooms" for the victims, or "homicidal gas chambers." As a matter of fact, the existence of this plan proves that in the minds of the Germans and, in particular, of Walter Dejaco, *Krema II* and *III* at Birkenau, simply replications of the *Kremas* that had originally been intended to be near the *Kommandantur* and the SS hospital in the main Auschwitz camp, could not have had any homicidal purpose (this is confirmed on page 200, where we read that *Krema II* and *III* were "designed without homicidal gas chambers");

- A surprising photograph, dating probably from May 1945, proves that the roof of *Krema I* was used as a dance floor, decorated with a red star and hammer and sickle as well as the Polish and Russian flags; people, says Pressac, danced on the roof of the "gas chamber"; I suggest that, if at that time anyone had given credence to the myth of the gassings, such a profanation would not have been permitted. Some months after the liberation of Auschwitz, evidently, the myth of the gas chambers had not yet taken the form in which we know it today (p. 149);
- Pressac reproduces a whole series of documents from the Weimar archives relating to engineer Kurt Prüfer, responsible for the design and construction of the "Topf & Sons" ovens; Prüfer was arrested, imprisoned, and interrogated after the war; nothing, in either his papers or his interrogations, provided the slightest proof of the existence of homicidal gas chambers in the crematoria (p. 93, 94, 191, and 371); if the documents that Pressac used contained so many criminal traces, Kurt Prüfer and other members of the firm's staff could have been easily been broken down;
- On 12 August 1942, Commandant Höss distributed 40 copies of a *Sonderbefehl* (special order) drafted as follows:

> A case of indisposition with slight symptoms of poisoning by hydrocyanic gas which occurred today makes it necessary to warn all those participating in the gassings (*Vergasungen*) and all other SS members that in particular on opening rooms used for gassing SS not wearing masks must wait at least five hours and keep at a distance of at least 15 meters from the chamber. In addition, particular attention should be paid to the wind

direction.—The gas being used at present contains less odorous warning agent and is therefore especially dangerous.—The SS garrison doctor declines all responsibility for any accident that should occur in the case where these directives have not been complied with by the SS members (p. 201).

The word used to designate the disinfection gassings is *Vergasungen*. The above directive confirms what the Revisionists have constantly said about the danger of using Zyklon B. If at Auschwitz incessant and massive gassing operations had been carried out, especially under such conditions as we have been told, accidents involving the SS personnel would have been innumerable. Neither the camp commandant, nor the chief medical officer responsible for the garrison, nor the other doctors, nor the SS would have tolerated such accidents (p. 201); and if we must look at it from the point of view of the legend, the "homicidal gassings" could not have gone off normally inasmuch as the Jewish personnel would not have been able to accomplish the task of entering a cyanide-treated space to drag out thousands of cyanide-impregnated corpses; and the criminal enterprise would immediately have ground to a halt for lack of personnel to carry it through successfully;[9]

- A telex dated 18 December 1942 reveals that during the month of December the work of both the inmates and the free civilian laborers had to be interrupted several times for delousing and disinfestation (*Entlausung und Entwesung*). The camp had to be isolated, and civilian workers had not been able to leave for six months. A period of leave from 23 December 1942 to 4 January 1943 was therefore essential (p. 210);

- In the archives of the Yad Vashem Memorial in Jerusalem, there is an album of 397 photos, taken by the Germans themselves during the war, which show construction at Auschwitz, including that of the crematoria. This is the most important information in Pressac's book. It is outrageous that this album has been kept hidden for so long, and that the publication of the

photographs is being done in driblets, so to speak, as was the case with the photos from the *Auschwitz Album*. The album of which I speak is the *Bauleitung Album* (the Construction Office album). The photographs therein confirm that Auschwitz was a prison or internment camp with nothing out of the ordinary about it. Pressac acknowledges that all the inmates we see at work appear to be as healthy as the civilian workers (p. 331, 339). Is he perhaps concealing from us photographs from this album which would give us a clearer idea of what went on at Auschwitz, or which would correct what we think we know about each room of the large *Kremas* and about the changes eventually made in those rooms?;

- Regarding a time sheet indicating the make-up of a crew constructing a chimney for *Krema IV* or *V*, Pressac comments that "the composition of the gang employed is typical, with 12 civilians and 20 prisoners working as bricklayer's laborers" (p. 412); so there was no possibility of secrets on that side either;
- One plan proves that the Germans planned to construct an enormous hospital sector covering all of the section of Birkenau known as "Mexico." Pressac says this fact is "a real godsend for the Revisionists." He admits that "there is an INCOMPATIBILITY [his capitals] in the creation of a health camp a few hundred yards from four *Krematorien* where, according to official history, people were exterminated on a large scale" (p. 512). And his commentary continues in the same direction. We await his parry. It does not come. Pressac's embarrassment is plain to see. He thinks perhaps he can manage to get out of the difficulty by saying that we ought not to underestimate the capacity for "doublethink" of the SS hierarchy, which blindly executed orders even when they were totally contradictory. I note that, as I said above (p. 133), Pressac is silent about the existence, near the crematoria, of a large hospital area containing 18 barracks[10]; more important, in his large book he persists in concealing the existence of this hospital area. A site plan dated 21 June 1944 shows that the Germans planned to construct, alongside the Birkenau railroad ramp, a total of six vegetable halls, each with a capacity of 930

cubic meters in size—a curious initiative in an "extermination camp" (p. 533-534).

The Bankruptcy, According to Pressac, of Traditional History

Pressac draws up a bankruptcy report: no one before him has been able to prove the existence of homicidal gas chambers at Auschwitz and Birkenau. He recognizes that the historians, the judges, the Soviets, the Poles, the arraigners of the "war criminals" as well as the accusers of the Revisionists have accumulated false proofs and worthless arguments (the Revisionists, too, are supposed to have failed in their endeavors). He writes at the end of his study, just before the appendices:

> This study already demonstrates the complete bankruptcy of the traditional history (and hence also of the methods and criticisms of the Revisionists), a history based for the most part on testimonies, assembled according to the mood of the moment, truncated to fit an arbitrary truth and sprinkled with a few German documents of uneven value and without any connection with one another (p. 264).

The celebrated work of Eugéne Aroneanu, which has for so long been a sort of Exterminationist bible (*Camps de concentration*, preface by Jacques Billiet, director of France's War Crimes Information Service, Office français d'édition, 1946), he calls "an historical monstrosity," "an incoherent and self-contradictory whole" (p. 15). On the post-war trials, he writes that "the tons of Zyklon B ordered by the camps were attributed to homicidal use without any verification." And, as I mentioned above (Part I, p. 38 in *The Journal of Historical Review*, Spring 1991), he makes the following remark, which will likely upset his Exterminationist friends:

> By far the greater part [of Zyklon B] (over 95 per cent) was destined for delousing (effects and buildings) while only a very small quantity (less than 5 per cent) had been used for homicidal gassings (*Ibidem*).

He is of the opinion that the American-conducted trial of Bruno Tesch, one of the officials of the Degesch company and thus responsible for the production of Zyklon B, was a "masquerade"; the court was not concerned with the technical

question, merely with the verbal testimony of one of his employees. In 1946, Pressac writes, simple malicious gossip could easily lead to someone being hanged. That was the case with Bruno Tesch (and, I should add, with his associate, K. Weinbacher) (p. 16-17); see in this regard the revealing article by William B. Lindsey, "Zyklon B, Auschwitz and the Trial of Dr. Bruno Tesch," *The Journal of Historical Review,* Autumn 1983, p. 261-303.

The Soviet film *Chronicles of the Liberation of the Camp, 1945* shows a gas-tight door as belonging to a homicidal gas chamber; in view of its location, says Pressac, it was a door to a disinfection gas chamber (p. 41). Further on, he talks about the work of the Soviet Commission of Inquiry as a "completely put-up job" and an "'historic' [*sic*] montage" (p. 46); the unfortunate thing is that the Nuremberg Tribunal "took judicial notice" of that work in the name of Article 21 of its charter.

At Birkenau, the vast hall of the *Zentral Sauna*, where the inmates disrobed (*Auskleideraum*) before showering, possessed an impressive number of tubular radiators. The Poles removed those radiators because, according to Pressac, this concern for the comfort of the inmates conflicts, in the minds of present-day visitors, with the location of the ruins of *Krema IV* and its "gas chambers," only 100 meters away (p. 78). He might have added that the Poles had dealt in the same manner with the "arrest cells" in Block 11, which the tourists visit in great numbers. I'm the one who called Pressac's attention to this mania of the Poles for removing heating apparatuses, whether for their own use or to give a crueler impression of the conditions under which the inmates are supposed to have lived.

At the Nuremberg Trial, a perfectly ordinary German document dealing with the crematory ovens was presented as proof of the extermination. Pressac sees there an example of "the stupid way in which the documents of the defeated were 'evaluated' by a tribunal of the victors" (p. 106).

A certain reconstruction by the Poles after the war is "far from being a faithful reproduction of the original state" because of its exaggerations and its simplifications (p. 108).

The fact, according to Pressac, that at a given time in 1942 the Germans used 2 to 3 per cent of the Zyklon B for murder and 97 or 98 per cent for disinfection "totally invalidates" the

interpretation of certain documents by the "the traditional historians" (p. 188).

Sometimes naming him and sometimes not, Pressac underscores the errors or the deceptions of Georges Wellers. The latter's argument based on the ventilation system of the *Leichenkeller* is, for Pressac, contradicted and indeed completely demolished by the facts (p. 289). Wellers' "quite erroneous" and "quite unfounded" interpretation deceived the lawyers of LICRA (the International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism) who pleaded against Faurisson (p. 355). In citing transcriptions of eyewitness testimony, Wellers has made cuts when those testimonies contain improbabilities, without any indication to the reader that he has done so (p. 479). The plan he gave of Auschwitz (*Les Chambres à gaz ont existé/Des documents, des témoignages, des chiffres*, Gallimard, 1981, p. 12-13) is of "a very mediocre quality as regards many details," although Pressac doesn't go so far as to use the word "falsification" (p. 165-166). What is striking is that this was the plan which hung for all to see in the courtroom at the Frankfurt trial and which Hermann Langbein reproduced in his book about that trial (*Der Auschwitz Prozess, Eine Dokumentation*, Frankfurt, Europäische Verlaganstalt, 1965, p. 932-933 [not 930-931 as Pressac mistakenly indicates]).

The supposed camouflage around *Krema II* and *III* is, according to Pressac, a product of the imagination of the "traditional historians" (p. 341).

Jan Sehn, the Polish investigative magistrate who prepared the trials of Rudolf Höss and of many other SS men, "made a change" in a German document while reproducing it as a copy allegedly identical to the original (p. 454). Nevertheless, Pressac is careful not to be too harsh with this investigative magistrate, to whom we owe a hundred lies about Auschwitz—to name one, the lie of the "nearly 60,000 persons in 24 hours" gassed at Birkenau (Jan Sehn, *Le Camp de concentration d'Oswiecim-Brzezinka*, Wydawnictwo Prawnicze, Warsaw, 1961, page 132). It is also to Sehn that we owe the "gigantic ditches" in the open air (as many as eight?) where, "in August 1944, the figure of 24,000 incinerations per day was attained" (with or without the crematoria?) (*Ibid.*, page 148). However, the aerial photos taken by the Allies on 25 August 1944 show absolutely nothing of the kind (D. Brugioni and R. Poirier, *The Holocaust Revisited*, Washington, CIA, February 1979, pages 9-11).

In 1981 I was brought to trial in Paris by the LICRA and many other organizations. The principal lawyer for the LICRA was Maître Bernard Jouanneau. From the pages Pressac devotes to this trial and to this lawyer it is evident that the author believes that many of the documents which they used against me do not, in reality, prove the existence of the homicidal gas chambers in the least. Not one of the eyewitness testimonies that Maître Jouanneau introduced had any real value. As for the technical arguments offered by Jouanneau, all of them were worthless, and sometimes "disastrous." Lastly, the lawyer outrageously abused the theory according to which the Germans, to hide their crime, used a "code" or "camouflage" (p. 554-556).

Pressac's inconsistencies have their amusing aspects. He remarks the dishonesty or incompetence of the Exterminationists but, at the same time, wants at all costs to save the Exterminationist theory. Thus he is reduced to flattering his friends for qualities that supposedly make up for their faults. And when he flatters, he doesn't do it by halves—he bootlicks: Maître Jouanneau's demonstration was based on a mass of errors but it was . . . "superb" (p. 556).

Manipulation of Testimonies

In a work that professes to be technical, one ought first to describe the scene of the crime, then examine the weapon used in the crime and the material proofs of the crime, in order, finally, to review the testimonies. Pressac, who has no understanding of method, opens all of his chapters with . . . the testimonies. It must be said that this is a way of clouding the reader's normal capacity for judgment, since these "testimonies" posit the existence of the homicidal gas chambers as a basic principle.

The quality of the testimonies that Pressac invokes is pitiful. Sometimes he acknowledges that himself, but he often seeks to save these testimonies from discredit, by means of the most oversubtle devices.

Rudolf Höss is presumed to have written *Commandant at Auschwitz* and Miklos Nyiszli supposedly wrote *Auschwitz: An Eyewitness Account of Mengele's Infamous Death Camp,* two testimonies offered as essential. Höss lived for several years at Auschwitz, and Nyiszli supposedly lived there for six months as an inmate. But what these two "witnesses" write, for example, about the ventilation of the homicidal gas

chambers, constitutes, according to Pressac, an enormous technical error. On this point they told the opposite of "the truth" (p. 16).

Alter Fajnzylberg, Filip Müller and Rudolf Höss affirm things that are "practically impossible," or "not corresponding to the facts," that "cast a doubt," are "wrong," "contrary to reality," "unlikely" (p. 126-127). The "errors" committed by Höss "throughout his autobiography" have an explanation which Pressac brandishes proudly and emphasizes in bold-face type: **He was present, without seeing** (p. 128). But, if that is the case, he wasn't a witness! How could he be present and not see? How can one be the commandant of an "extermination camp" and not see the instrument of "exterminating" at least a million (?) people? How was this commandant able to stress the dangers of Zyklon in 1942 (see above, p. 137-138) and then in 1946 decree that the dangers were non-existent (see below, p. 172-173, note 9)?

As for the eyewitness testimony, so often invoked, of SS man Pery Broad, the form and the tone of it, Pressac tells us, "sound false." Broad's writings, which we owe to the Poles, cannot be sincere. They are "colored by a rather too flagrant Polish patriotism." The Broad manuscript is not known. It has all been "slightly" reworked by the Poles (his quotation marks around "slightly" imply that the rework was not slight!). But what does it matter, asks Pressac: despite the discrepancies between the various witnesses, some homicidal gassings did take place in *Krema I*—that is an established fact (p. 128). "Established"? By whom? By what? He does not say.

The testimony of Szlamy Dragon elicits the following commentary:

> This is physically impossible [. . .]. I do not think that this witness was intentionally misleading, but he was following the tendency to exaggerate which seems to have been the general rule at the time of the liberation and which is what gave rise to the figure of 4 million victims for K.L. Auschwitz, a figure now considered to be pure propaganda. It should be divided by four to get close to reality (p. 171).

In 1972, at the Dejaco/Ertl trial, witness Dragon showed "total confusion" (p. 172; see Part I, p. 60, in *The Journal of Historical Review*, Spring 1991).

The testimonies of Pery Broad, of Rudolf Höss, Dr. Johann-Paul Kremer, and of SS man Hölblinger (which Pressac writes

as Höblinger) on the several *Bunker* are subject to reservations expressed in the following terms: "entirely imaginary," "physically impossible," "impossible to situate this scene" (p. 174).

The testimony of Nyiszli would be valid providing . . . that his figures be divided by four—but not always. Pressac speaks of Nyiszli's "number four," and says that his figures are "worrying" (p. 179).

In 1980, a great fuss was made about Filip Müller's book, *Trois ans dans une chambre à gaz d'Auschwitz* (Three Years in a Gas Chamber at Auschwitz), foreword by Claude Lanzmann, ed. Pygmalion/G. Watelet. [The English version, *Eyewitness Auschwitz: Three Years in a Gas Chamber at Auschwitz*, New York, Stein and Day, 1979, is somewhat different than the French edition.] In France Jean Pierre-Bloch awarded the book the LICRA prize. Filip Müller was one of the star witnesses at the Auschwitz trial (1963-1965), and in the film *Shoah*. In reality, he was a mythomaniac, which even Pressac realizes, for he writes:

> [in his book, Müller] has accumulated errors, thus making his account historically dubious. The best approach is to read it as a novel based on true history (p. 181).

If the members of the *Sonderkommando* affirm that 5 or 7 or 12 bodies were burned in a single muffle of a crematory oven at one time, Pressac suggests that this is an exaggeration, and that probably only three bodies at a time could have been incinerated, and skinny ones at that (p. 229). He says that today's tourist, "after a silent prayer" (*sic!*) in front of *Krema I*, must surely realize that "We find here the famous multiplying factor of four used by Dr. Miklos Nyiszli" (p. 483).

At Auschwitz visitors can see in the former "Block 4" a model that professes to show a *Krema* in the midst of a gassing. This reconstruction, it must be said, inadvertently demonstrates the physical impossibilities of the homicidal gassings, in particular the cramped premises and the congestion that would have resulted from the first "gassing." Add to that the fact that documents which have subsequently come to light, especially the aerial photos taken by the Allies in 1943/44 and published in 1979, underscore the "faults" of this model. Of small import to Pressac, who sees in the reconstruction the "powerful evocation of a mass gassing" (p. 378).

Beginning on p. 459, the author attempts to save from disaster the absurd *War Refugee Board Report* of November 1944, sometimes known as the *Protocols of Auschwitz.* Just the criticisms of it that Pressac himself is obliged to make totally discredit this mendacious work, which is due largely to Rudolf Vrba, today a professor of pharmacology at a university in Vancouver (see Robert Faurisson, "The Zündel Trials (1985 and 1988)," *The Journal of Historical Review*, Winter 1988-1989, p. 420-421).

The drawings of one David Olère are in favor with Pressac, who knew the artist personally, but these drawings, altogether grotesque, seem inspired chiefly by a sort of sex-shop anti-Nazism. Pressac considers them "masterpieces of authenticity" (p. 554) but . . . he has reservations as to their documentary worth and about the sincerity of the witness (p. 493-497, 554-556). Playing the prude, he goes so far as to refrain from reproducing certain drawings (p. 498). This same David Olère asserts that the SS made sausages they called "*Kremawurst*" (crematorium sausages) out of human flesh (p. 554). His memory suffers from a certain "deterioration" (p. 493), and he is subject to what Pressac calls the "*Krematorium delirium*" (p. 556).

The author's favorite witness is the Jewish shoemaker Henryk Tauber. But this witness, too, tends to use "the famous multiplying factor of four" (p. 483). *He has never seen a gassing but either he was told about it* (*Ibid.*) or else he has seen the bodies of those whom he calls gassed (page 489). One day, through a window, he saw an SS man pouring Zyklon B into a gas chamber (p. 494). If over so many years he saw nothing more than that, it was because during the gassing operations the SS systematically locked up the members of the *Sonderkommando* in . . . the coke store. This is also Alter Fajnzylberg's explanation. The SS wanted to conceal the existence of the gassings but not the existence of the people gassed!

Tauber tells the story of a Jew named Lejb. One day, the Germans hung Lejb, hands tied behind his back, from an iron bar above the firing hearths, for an hour. Then, after untying his hands and feet, they threw him into a cold crematorium furnace. Gasoline was poured into the lower ash bin and lit. The flames reached the muffle in which Lejb was trapped. A few minutes later, they opened the door of the furnace. The

condemned man came running out, covered with burns. Next, he was ordered to run round the yard shouting that he was a thief. Finally, he was forced to climb the barbed wire fence, where he was killed with a gunshot!

Tauber speaks also of an open-air pit filled with human fat. The fat ran from the corpses into a separate reservoir, dug in the ground. This fat was poured over the corpses to accelerate their combustion. One day, the SS men threw a man into the boiling fat, then pulled him out, still alive, and shot him. "The next day, the corpse was brought back to the crematorium, where it was incinerated in a pit [!]" (p. 494).

Tauber says that around 2,500 bodies a day were incinerated in a single crematorium. Here is Pressac's commentary:

> This figure is unrealistic (and it is connected with the propaganda of the immediate post-war period), [. . .]. Here we find almost the famous multiplication factor of four, of which Dr. Miklos Nyiszli made such abundant and lamentable use in his book that his credibility was long contested. Henryk Tauber is far from being the only witness to say in substance "I don't know the number of dead" or "I think it was so many" and then coolly say one or two sentences later, that after due consideration, we do arrive at the (standard) figure of 4 million victims in all. This type of imposed falsehood has to be excused, I would stress, because of the political climate of the period 1945-1950 (p. 494).[11]

In just one passage on page 498, Pressac, to qualify the assertions of his favorite witness, uses the words "dubious," "incorrect" (twice), "not certain," "[made up] story," and "pure myth." And if at the end of his testimony Tauber is so weak and so vague about *Krema IV* and *V*, no one can reproach him for this, says Pressac, who supposes that the witness "must have been exhausted by the end of his deposition" (p. 502).

In short, all these witnesses seem to be suffering greatly, just like David Olère, from what pharmacist Pressac calls *Krematorium delirium* (p. 556).

Pressac has no criterion for distinguishing the true and the false witness from one another. His witnesses can pile up the worst errors or the worst insanities, yet they will find favor in our man's eyes the moment he decides to make authentic witnesses out of them.

A witness meticulously describes the room called a gas chamber, and sees three pillars when there were really four:

Pressac tells us it's because he didn't go clear to the end of the room. The same witness speaks of an entrance door and an exit door, when there was only one door to the room, with no other exit: this error, Pressac says, can be explained by the route taken by that witness during his visit (!). The witness talks about ten cremation ovens when there were five (each with three muffles): Pressac says that's because "probably he had not walked the entire length of the oven room but instead remained at the west entrance." The number of victims that the witness gives is incredible: that, Pressac reassures us, is because here it's a question of an "inflated number" given by an SS man who served as the witness's guide; or there, it's an "SS propaganda figure" (p. 239).

If a witness sketches the crematory room while forgetting to note the presence of rails, Pressac says that since the rails served no purpose, the witness's "visual memory did not retain them" (p. 229). Let the same witness commit four grave material errors, and it's because "the visual memories of a survivor deteriorate with time" (p. 493). If this witness adds imaginary details to his sketch, no matter: it was done "to make it better" (*Ibid.*).

Throughout his book, Pressac does his utmost to discover excuses for the innumerable "errors" of his witnesses, errors in the location, the color, the material, the form, the distance, the number of whatever is being discussed.

But his favorite explanation is that all these "errors" are the fault of the SS and "the usual SS exaggeration" (p. 108), and that, if in their confessions taken by the Allies, the SS confessed to enormities, it was as due to "professional pride" (p. 161).

Thanks to this method, Pressac's witnesses, Jewish or otherwise, win incessantly, while the SS men can only lose every time.

Pressac's Involuntary Drollery Apropos M. Nyiszli

At this point I would like to return to a case already mentioned, that of Dr. Nyiszli. One of the best known false testimonies in the concentration camp literature, next to Martin Gray's *For Those I Loved*, is that of Dr. Miklos Nyiszli: *Auschwitz: An Eyewitness Account of Mengele's Infamous Death Camp*, translated and adapted from the Hungarian by Tibère Kremer (New York: Fell Publishing Co., 1960).

Paul Rassinier often denounced this forgery (see *The Holocaust Story and the Lies of Ulysses* (Costa Mesa, CA: The Institute for Historical Review, 1988, p. 244-250), as has Carlo Mattogno. Neither the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1971), nor the recent *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* (1990), mentions Nyiszli's book, which has been long been discredited.

Nevertheless, at the recent trial of the Revisionist Michel Konen at Meaux, Hubert Heilbronn, president of the Lazare Bank, had the effrontery to mention only one testimony in support of the existence of the Auschwitz gas chambers: that of Miklos Nyiszli (*Le Figaro*, 6 July 1990, p. 8).

Pressac, too, resuscitates Nyiszli. But I think it's fair to say that in so doing he has, in his comments on Nyiszli's testimony, inadvertently written two exceedingly funny pages (p. 474- 475). I'll let the reader be the judge.

Miklos Nyiszli, a Jew, allegedly lived for six months in a Birkenau crematorium serving as an assistant to Dr. Josef Mengele in the dissection room. Pressac selects from Nyiszli's book only Chapter VII, in which this witness supposedly describes a gassing operation in *Krema II.* At first Pressac affirms that this description is "entirely accurate, EXCEPT for certain FIGURES which are very WRONG indeed [Pressac's capitals]" (p. 473). Next, he comments on the text, and here one realizes that, even for a Pressac, almost all the data in Nyiszli's book, whether numbers or physical details, are erroneous.

The witness declares that the gas chamber was 500 feet (150 meters) long; but, Pressac says, a plan (which this writer discovered and which is borne out by the building's ruins) shows that the length of the room under discussion could not have exceeded 100 feet (30 meters). How to explain? It's simple, says Pressac: the witness told the truth, but he used a multiplier of five.

The witness states that the undressing room was 200 yards (about 200 meters) long; well, says Pressac, everything shows that room measured 50 yards (around 50 meters) in length. For here, according to Pressac, Nyiszli has used a multiplier of four.

Since the average of the various multipliers is four, Pressac, proud of his discovery, gets to talking in his book, whether regarding Nyiszli or other affirmations and testimonies, of the "famous multiplying factor of four" (see p. 483, 494).

Accordingly, following our pharmacist, if we wish to find the real figures, it behooves as we read to *divide* all the numbers by four.

As for me, I should say that by that reckoning, every false witness would be in the clear. Supposing a "witness" states that in six months (the duration of Nyiszli's stay in Auschwitz) he saw four men who were all 7 meters tall and 200 years old. We can assume that anybody would dismiss such a witness. Anybody but Pressac, who, applying the rule of the famous divisor of four, would say: this witness is telling the truth: he saw one man, who was *1.75 meters* tall and *50 years* old.

But Pressac's gymnastics don't end here. I have made a critical review of his comments on the Nyiszli testimony only *re* the short passage that Nyiszli has written on the gassings. Here we have, on the one hand, the multipliers Pressac says Nyiszli used; and, on the other hand, a sampling of Pressac's comments regarding such and such a fact, physical reality, or figure reported by Nyiszli (p. 474-475):

–PRESSAC'S COMMENTS ON NYISZLI'S COEFFICIENTS:

1. Nyiszli, says Pressac, has divided by 2.
2. Nyiszli, says Pressac, has multiplied by 3; by 5; by 4; by 2.5; by 6.7; by 4; by 4; by 2.5; by 4; by 2 to 3.

–PRESSAC'S EVALUATIONS OF NYISZLI'S STATEMENTS:

Wrong
Wrong
Wrong
Wrong
Wrong and deliberately misleading [. . .]. Whom is Dr. Nyiszli trying to mislead and why?
Lack of familiarity with the premises
"War story" pure and simple
Pure invention
Legend

. . . (and let us add that, when the witness talks about "concrete," we must read "wood"; when he talks about "chlorine," we must read "hydrocyanic acid").

Pressac's conclusion is delectable. He proudly entitles it "The Multiplier." Here Pressac, far from dismissing his witness for his exaggerations and fables, discovers in the use of the multiplier 4 (the average of the various figures is 3.8) the

sign that Dr. Nyiszli, for all his not being scientific and rigorous, is manifestly an academic who bears the stamp of intellectual training of the most serious kind. He writes:

> The average of the different multipliers is almost exactly four.[12] If we apply this to the official total of 4 million victims we arrive at a figure much closer to reality: 1 million. This calculation is by no means scientific but it shows that DOCTOR NYISZLI, a respected ACADEMIC, TRAINED IN GERMANY, multiplied the figures by FOUR when describing the interior of *Krematorium II* and when speaking of the number of persons or victims (p. 475).

In short, Pressac understands that the "credibility" of Nyiszli's book has been "long contested" (p. 494); that was due to "the famous multiplication factor of four of which Dr. Miklos Nyiszli made such abundant and lamentable use" (*Ibid.*). But fortunately Pressac has arrived; he has discovered the key needed by anyone reading Nyiszli's book and, thanks to that key, everything is deciphered. There is no longer any reason to challenge the credibility of an honorable academic, educated in Germany. Pressac has saved Nyiszli.

But the reader, on seeing any figure at all from the pen of this astonishing witness, can never know whether the number is to be considered exact, or whether it is necessary to multiply it or divide it, and if so, by exactly how much.

"Faurisson and His Clique" (p. 12)

I shall forgo counting the number of times that Pressac attacks the Revisionists in general and me in particular. Mark Weber writes:

> Pressac does not seem to be a psychologically sound person. For example, he confesses that he "nearly" killed himself in the Auschwitz main camp in October 1979 (p. 537). His relationship with Dr. Faurisson and French Revisionist publisher Pierre Guillaume—to which he devotes several pages—changed from a kind of admiration to bitter personal animosity. He cites nothing about Faurisson's treatment of him that would justify such visceral enmity, even granting the intensity of his disagreement about the Holocaust issue. The emotional and even vicious nature of Pressac's furious hostility towards Faurisson suggests an insecure and unstable personality ("Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers," *The Journal of Historical Review*, Summer 1990, p. 231-237).

Here I must provide an explanation. Pressac has a specific reason for not liking me: in the early 1980s, I was led to show him to the door of the home of Pierre Guillaume (where he had come to see us once more without announcing his arrival beforehand). That is the kind of humiliation which is not forgotten, especially by someone who, afflicted with a sense of inferiority, seeks approval, fishes for compliments, offers his services insistently and wishes to be taken seriously. Pressac ended up exhausting my patience. His obsequiousness, his mental confusion, his panicky fears, his horror of clarity and of unequivocal positions, his propensity to lie and to cheat made his visits more and more undesirable. He makes no allusion to that humiliating episode in his book; on the contrary, he states that in March or April 1981 he took the initiative and "broke completely with Faurisson" (p. 554). That is quite simply false. He was ushered to the door, and, I must say, in no uncertain terms.

Jean-Claude Pressac was an admirer of Hitler, of Degrelle and of militaria. He had a bust of Hitler in his home, in a place of honor, and, fearing our reaction at the time of a visit to his home, had forewarned Guillaume and myself about it, not without some apprehension. He had dreamt of writing a novel showing the victory of his hero and the triumph of National Socialism (see, in this regard, p. 541). He had been educated at the military academy of La Flèche and, according to Guillaume, himself a former student at that establishment, had in 1959 received a reprimand from the school's administration due to a sketch of Nazi inspiration that he had displayed at the time of a school celebration. He said that he was a supporter of Pierre Sidos, a French far-rightist. The extreme right, or what is called that, has, side by side with strong personalities (as in the case of Leon Degrelle), poor wretches who admire force since they are weak. Such was the fact with Pressac who, moreover, had certain medical problems which, I must say, increased my pity for him.

Guillaume devoted several pages to Pressac in his book *Droit et histoire* (La Vieille Taupe, 1986, p. 118-125). I recommend reading those pages, which are both lively and penetrating.

Before meeting us, Pressac believed in the gas chambers. I showed him my documentation. He was staggered by it, and recognized his error. Believing he knew how to read the plans that I had discovered in the archives of the Auschwitz

Museum, he offered us his services. Half-serious, half-mocking, we took to calling him "Schliemann," from the name of the discoverer of the ruins of Troy. Pressac had a peculiar habit: at each encounter, his first words were: "I've blown it." He "blew it"—he made a mistake—repeatedly. Easily influenced, easily anguished, he perpetually changed his opinion on details and each time adopted the most peremptory tone in articulating his thesis of the day. Another of his eccentricities: as soon as the simplest question put him in a quandary (and his life was a perpetual quandary), he would answer: "Yes/No." Not: "Yes and no" but, in a single breath: "Yes/No." And it was impossible for him to clarify his answer, which served him as a refuge, as with a child caught being naughty. He had the irritating habit of pretending, from one minute to the next, that he hadn't said what he had just said. I invited him accordingly to record our conversations with a tape recorder to avoid misunderstandings. With childish fear, offering no explanation, he refused to be recorded.

But he no longer believed in the gas chambers. He began to feel called to be a Revisionist; wishing it is not enough, however. My life and that of Pierre Guillaume became more and more difficult. Pressac grew frantic. The cumulative effects of the trials and of the attacks of all sorts, the progressive deterioration of my physical health, our financial problems, a general atmosphere of doom (it should be recalled here what happened at the time of the blast on the "Rue Copernic," much worse than that of the "Carpentras cemetery"[13]) left our neophyte more and more feverish and hesitant. He pleaded with me to give up so dangerous an enterprise. For his part, he began to take his distance from us. "Jewish friends" had made him understand that there were limits to skepticism which could not be transgressed (p. 548). Upon reading the plans of Auschwitz and Birkenau that I had furnished him in abundance, he saw well enough that the gassings were impossible. But, you never know, he began to say, perhaps there really did take place here and there a few small homicidal gassings, discreet, furtive, improvised: what he called "casual," or "itty-bitty," gassings.

Before his first departure for Auschwitz, following our meeting, he had asked me what research he could undertake there for me. I had told him that I was interested in the

question of the cremations: the officially recorded number of the bodies incinerated; status of persons cremated (inmates/guards/German soldiers and officers and members of their families); number of employees assigned to cremation of corpses and to the incinerations in the rubbish ovens; the duration of the cremations; time cards, etc.). I thought, as a matter of fact, that those numbers alone would be enough to demonstrate the impossibility of the stupendous number of cremations that would have been required by the gassing of hundreds of thousands of victims, over and above the cremations necessitated by the ravages of the epidemics in the camp.

On his return from Auschwitz, Pressac told me with an air of embarrassment that he had not found the time to occupy himself with the question that interested me. He had had too much work to do, and then, he added, a young Polish girl had taken a great deal of his time: innocent boasting by the timid.

Before his second journey to Auschwitz, he asked me the same question and I gave him the same answer. Upon his return, he again stated that he had not had the time to undertake the necessary research. Let me note here parenthetically that in his large book Pressac *continues to evade my questions* (see, below, Appendix 2, "How Many Cremations a Day in Krema II?," p. 166-167).

Pressac wound up by telling us that he no longer wanted to take sides between the Revisionists and the Exterminationists. He said he wished to have relations with both camps and to content himself with purely technical work. I encouraged him in that path and, in a dedication the text of which he reports (p. 554) but the context of which he distorts, I urged him to seek, to discover, to be cold, impartial and materialistic. But that was too much to ask of him. Finding that he was unable to buckle down to methodical and austere work that would have let him put a bit of order into his thoughts, I sent him on his way. I had introduced him to the study of the supposed gas chamber at Struthof (Alsace). Later on, he published, under the auspices of Serge Klarsfeld, a small book in English—poor and confused—on the subject. I see that, in his large book, he treats the subject anew. But he takes care not to reveal a discovery I had made virtually in his presence when, at the Palace of Justice in Paris, together with Pierre Guillaume and Maître Eric Delcroix, we examined the archives of the "Struthof trial," archives provided at LICRA's request by the

headquarters, in Paris, of the Gendarmerie and Justice Militaire. In those archives I found a document revealing that in December 1945 Professor René Fabre, Dean of the faculty of pharmacy at the University of Paris, had signed an expert report of the greatest interest. The professor had successively examined the scrapings done around the chimney of the alleged homicidal gas chamber and, in the public hospital of Strasbourg, the well-preserved corpses of the persons supposedly gassed. His finding in both cases was negative: there was no trace of gassing.

In reality, that particular gas chamber, which was only relatively air-tight, had served chiefly for the training German army recruits in the wearing of gas masks; in that case, the gas presented nowhere near the same danger as hydrocyanic acid (Zyklon B). Pressac had been happy to be able to demonstrate that for us. He had gone to take some photos of a training session in a French army gas chamber not far from Paris. I have a set of those photographs.

Three Little Secrets of Jean-Claude Pressac

A legend that is dear to the heart of Elie Wiesel, Filip Müller and Georges Wellers maintains that the Germans dug gigantic pits at Birkenau in which they burned thousands of bodies in the open air. I had drawn Pressac's attention to the fact that the Birkenau camp was located in an area of vast marshes alongside a tributary of the Vistula River and that, despite their drainage work there, the water table continued of necessity to rise to just a short distance below ground level[14]. It was difficult, therefore, to imagine such pits being dug, and I added that in any case it must have been complicated to burn corpses in pits due to the lack of oxygen. Then Pressac, whom I was always advising to get physical verification, dug a small hole in his garden and tried to incinerate the body of a rabbit. He never succeeded. When we visited the site of his "incineration ditch," he was full of quips about the myth of the "incineration ditches" at Birkenau, and the tale of the rabbit became for us a standing joke.

Visitors to Struthof can see, on the one hand, the Natzweiler camp itself, with its crematorium and, far from the camp, a small building containing the supposed homicidal gas chamber. Pressac pointed out to me that, *if they had decided to lie about Natzweiler as they had lied about Auschwitz* (*sic*), they

could have made people believe there was a homicidal gas chamber in the crematorium. To prove it, he made up for me a sort of false plan of that building, based on the true plan that we had discovered in the archives of the Gendarmerie and the Justice Militaire. I still have that false plan, drawn by Pressac and bearing his explanatory notes. He doesn't breathe a word of this little job in his large book.

I also have, by Pressac, a two-volume study which he entitled *Auschwitz, architecture paisible* (Auschwitz, Peaceful Architecture). It concerns *Krema IV* and *V*. It is extremely disordered and has never been published. My copy is marked No. 2. The dedication page is laughable: Pressac, offering his services to all comers, launches into flattery addressed to certain Exterminationists as well as certain Revisionists. I come in for my share of these compliments, which are laid on too thick to be sincere.

A Few Borrowings and A Few Lies

In his shorter studies, as in his big book, Pressac has plundered my work outrageously. He is indebted to me for a large part of the plans, documents and photographs that he has published; the reminder comprises, most of the time, plans, documents, and photographs from the same source or of an identical character. Only the photos from the *Bauleitung Album*, which is in the possession of the Israelis, are an original contribution.

The baseness of Pressac's attacks on me, his deceptions and lies in the presentation of certain facts, would oblige me to correct far too many of his allegations than I am able to here. I am described as a coward, too afraid, "of course," to appear at my trial (p. 554); but he knows I was seriously ill at the time. He says that one day, in 1982, he telephoned me and found me a "human wreck"; he writes: "I was shocked and disgusted to find [Faurisson] had reached rock bottom, dragging his family down with him" (p. 558). It is true that in 1981 and 1982 I believed I had reached the depths of physical, moral and financial distress, and that my wife and children shared that distress with me; I did not for all that speak of my "martyrdom" (*Ibid.*) and I do not see what is "shocking" and "disgusting" about my fighting as I did to the limit of my strength. I frightened Pressac. I had always frightened him by my fierceness in defending myself and by my refusal to bow my head.

He ventures to write:

> Confronted with the new evidence, Faurisson and Guillaume had a moment of indecision, seeing the possibility of throwing in the sponge and officially declaring that it did appear that some homicidal gassings had taken place at Birkenau (p. 554).

Here, he lies and he knows that he lies, at least as regards me. He never presented me with the slightest proof of what he called the "casual gassings"; and I personally have never considered the possibility of a retraction of any kind.[15]

Pressac knows that the trials that were forced on me and that brought me condemnations unprecedented in the contemporary history of France were nothing but stage productions, and that the documents with which they tried to crush me were valueless. He knows it and he says it, whether explicitly, as when he alludes to the role of Maître Jouanneau, the LICRA lawyer, or implicitly, when he happens to analyze a "proof" used against "Faurisson" at the time of a trial and admits that said "proof" does not possess the value attributed to it in the slightest (p. 49, 554-556).

Questions Evaded

Pressac has evaded a good twenty essential questions of a technical nature which have been posed by the Revisionists. I shall cite only a few of them:

- *Krema I:* How can one explain the presence of a homicidal gas chamber using Zyklon B (an explosive gas) that opened onto a room where six crematory ovens were in operation, sometimes reaching temperatures of 800 degrees? How could the supposed gas chamber have had a fragile door, one fitted with glass and without a bolt and which, opening as it did to the inside, would have been blocked by heaps of corpses? How could the daily ventilation process have been carried out just twenty meters away from the windows of the SS hospital?
- *Krema II* and *III*: Since it would appear that the victims came in batches of 2,000[16] persons, and it took an hour and a half to incinerate one body in each of the 15 muffles, at the end of this period of time there would still have remained 1,985 bodies to incinerate. Where were they stored in the meantime? How could the ventilation be done from the floor to the ceiling (Zyklon is lighter than air) when everything was set up for ventilation in

the opposite direction? Where did they store the bodies of those who, day in and day out, died of natural causes? In general, how do we reconcile the scanty dimensions of the premises (the little elevator!) with the immensity of the massacres to be carried out there?

- *Krema IV* and *V*: What were coal stoves doing in the gas chambers?
- Where were the crowds waiting to enter the crematoria able to gather, considering that the aerial photos taken by the Allies never show even the slightest trace of such crowds; and that the area around the crematoria, far from having been trampled by any crowds, was occupied by well-laid-out gardens?
- How is it that the gas slaughterhouses would be located right in the middle of such a variety of other facilities, which, in striking contrast to killing centers, include: a soccer field, hospital buildings, decantation basins, and buildings for showering and disinfection?
- Where are the countless scientific, technical and medical documents which prove that before, during and after the creation and operation of those chemical slaughterhouses (unprecedented in the history of science and technology) the Germans supposedly prepared, constructed, and surveyed those pharaonic undertakings for the terrible purpose alleged, at a time when circumstances required people to get written authorizations and submit detailed budgets to get even a screw or a brick or a kilo of coal?

Deliberate Omissions

It will be remembered that the only task I assigned to Pressac was that regarding documents relevant to the cremations (see above, page 153-154). Neither at the time of his first sojourn at Auschwitz, nor during his second stay, it appears, had he been able to find time to study the matter. Now that his book has appeared, his continued silence on this point is striking.

One will note that he is very careful not to say that such documents do not exist. He knows all too well that they do exist. He prefers to avoid talking about them. Why does he conceal from his readers the existence of a host of documents which prove that a record was made of each cremation?[17] In

the case of teeth extracted from a corpse before its cremation, the usual German attention to detail went so far as to demand the completion of a printed form, with the heading "Dental Station of the Auschwitz Camp," supplying the date of cremation, the complete identity of the internee, his registration number, the number of teeth (right, left, upper, lower), etc. (see *Contribution à l'histoire d'Auschwitz*, Auschwitz Museum, 1968, the photograph of the document between pages 80 and 81).

Why does Pressac not mention this type of document, or a single one of the documents required by the Auschwitz chancellery on the death of anyone, with or so twenty signatures for deaths from natural causes and about thirty signatures for deaths from non-natural causes (Dr. Tadeusz Paczula, former prisoner, "The Organization and Administration of the Camp Hospital in the Concentration Camp Auschwitz I," International Auschwitz Committee, [Blue] *Anthology*, Vol. II, Part I, Warsaw, 1969, p. 45)?

Why does he not make the slightest mention of the "death registers" in which the Germans collected, with a separate page for each decedent, all information relevant to each death? The Revisionists had pointed out the existence of two or three volumes of those *Totenbücher*, or *Sterbebücher*, in the Auschwitz Museum, and of forty or so in Moscow: all of them, naturally, inaccessible to independent researchers. It was only under pressure from the Revisionists, notably at the time of the Zündel trial in Toronto in 1988, that the decision was made in 1989 to reveal the existence of the registers to the general public. Pressac was unlucky. His book, *in which he conceals the existence of the registers*, was no sooner finished than the Soviet Union revealed that, for its part, it retained a large number—but not all—of these precious documents, which strike a lethal blow to the extermination legend. Pressac, by failing to mention that there were also two or three of these death registers in the archives of the Auschwitz Museum—to which he had free access—lied by omission.

Regarding the amount of coke necessary for the cremations and incinerations, Pressac's vagueness is such that I find it suspect (see microfilm 12,012 mentioned on page 87, the table on page 224, and the remarks on page 227). It is evident that the consumption of coke was certainly ridiculously low in comparison to the amount that would have been required for the gigantic cremations spoken of by the legend, but Pressac

has so muddled everything that it is not possible to get a precise idea of it. It is probable that each muffle burned no more than an average of 6 or 7 bodies each day, like the oil-fired furnaces at Buchenwald (p. 106), and it is plain that the German document of 28 June 1943 indicating an incineration capacity of 4,756 bodies a day for Auschwitz (with the ovens operating 12 hours each day) is unacceptable. Moreover, Pressac does not hesitate to justify a figure just as extravagant (340 for *Krema I*, 1,440 for *Krema II*, 1,440 for *Krema III*, 768 for *Krema IV* and 768 for *Krema V*) and, by a method dear to him, he puts these exaggerations down to the "bragging" of the SS men, who, at any rate in similar instances, must have "multiplied the real figures by a factor of 2 to 5" (p. 110).

But his most unforgivable lie by omission concerns the *daily activity* of the Auschwitz and Birkenau crematoria. The reader who has just finished his book may believe that the five crematoria were devoted to the cremation of . . . people who had been gassed. Day after day, however, these crematoria received the bodies of victims of various epidemics, of persons who had died of natural causes, of inmates, guards, soldiers, civilians. And if, for example, *Krema I* was near the SS hospital, that was, in the first place, to cremate the SS dead. Dr. Popiersch, the chief surgeon, died of typhus and was cremated at Auschwitz. The same was true of the wife of SS man Caesar, who was in charge of agricultural work, and of Alma Rosé, the German Jewess who conducted the women's orchestra of the Birkenau camp and, if we are to believe Fania Fénelon, was accorded an extraordinary funeral (Fania Fénelon, *Playing for Time*, New York, Atheneum, 1977, p. 208). Pressac never tells us how the normal activity of the crematoria could be combined each day with the activities surrounding the alleged gassings: transport to the morgues, storage of the bodies, cremation, collection of ashes, transferral to urns, dispatch of the urns, etc.

Conclusion

In 1982, I reviewed Pressac's study on *Krema IV* and *V* at Birkenau. I entitled that review:

The Myth of the "Gas Chambers" Enters Its Death Agony

To this review, which I wrote in 1990, I could give the following title:

The Death of the "Gas Chamber" Myth

In the media, this myth manages to survive somehow or other; in academic or scientific circles, it is dead. Our "suburban pharmacist," as Vidal-Naquet calls him, had offered himself as a savior; his magic potions, in 1982, aggravated the patient's condition; and in 1989, that is, seven years later, they have finished him off.

I know Revisionists who, confronting a thesis so disastrous for Exterminationism, wonder whether Pressac could be one of their own, and working undercover, have hoodwinked the Klarsfelds. I don't believe that in the least. Pressac is a neophyte, an autodidact, an innocent crossed with a fox. His personality is unstable; he is inconsistent, a weathercock that turns with every wind. He argues illogically and does not know how to express himself either in speech or writing—a deficiency that would be merely annoying in the exposition of a coherent thesis, but which here, with an incoherent and hybrid thesis, becomes absolutely catastrophic. Pressac isn't wearing any mask; it is his real face which we find disconcerting. For their part, the Klarsfelds lack discernment; they are even blind. They find it "normal" that, in certain cases, persons who displease the Jewish community should be killed or seriously injured (*Radio J*, 17 September 1989, Agence France Press, 1:36PM; *La Lettre télégraphique Juive*, 18 September, p. 1; *Le Monde*, 19 September, p. 14). The anguish of Serge and Beate Klarsfeld at the rise of Revisionism—despite their awareness that it has access neither to money nor to the public forum—is causing them to lose their judgement and their self-control. To the Klarsfelds, all means seem justified; every assistance is welcome; any media operation can serve. Pressac, driven away by Faurisson, dismissed by Wellers, went on to offer his services to the Klarsfelds. He was hired. This tedious tome must have cost them plenty. But, if friends of the Klarsfelds paid for it dearly in money, its results will cost them even more, which will be fatal for the Exterminationists and providential for the Revisionists.

In 1979, Pierre Vidal-Naquet and Léon Poliakov proclaimed, with thirty-two other French historians, that it was unnecessary to ask questions about the technique and the operation of the homicidal gas chambers. They stated precisely:

> It is not necessary to ask how, *technically*, such a mass murder was possible. It was possible technically since it took place. That is the necessary point of departure for any historical inquiry on this subject. It is our function simply to recall that truth: there is not, there cannot be any debate about the existence of the gas chambers (*Le Monde*, 21 February 1979, p. 23).

In my "Response to a Paper Historian" (*The Journal of Historical Review*, Spring 1986, p. 24), I spoke of the silliness of that declaration, and I added:

> [. . .] The text in *Le Monde* had been conceived to ward off a very pressing problem. In the confusion that was provoked by my article on "The Rumor of Auschwitz" [*Le Monde*, 29 December 1978, p. 8], Vidal-Naquet and Poliakov hastily drew up a manifesto, and then took it some signers, saying to them: "We say there cannot be any debate, but it is very clear that you must not pay any attention to that phrase and that you all have to get busy replying to Faurisson." That is how Vidal-Naquet ingenuously puts it on page 196 of [*Les Juifs, la mémoire et le présent*, Maspero, 1981] when he writes: "A good number of historians signed the declaration published in *Le Monde* on 21 February 1979, but very few got busy, one of the rare exceptions being F[rançois] Delpech."

Vidal-Naquet, Poliakov, and the other survivors of the "declaration" of the thirty-four historians have thus had to wait ten years (1979-1989) to see appear at last an attempt at refutation of my *Le Monde* article on "The Rumor of Auschwitz." Had my article been based on mere foolishness, its refutation wouldn't have required so long a time, nor so voluminous and, as we have established, so feeble a response as that made by Pressac.

Pressac has put his name to a masterpiece of inanity. His intellectual capacities did not permit the hope of anything better. His propensity for deception and for manipulating documents, already so remarkable in his presentation of the *Auschwitz Album* (Le Seuil, 1983) is here confirmed.[18]

But the pharmacist from La Ville du Bois is only a miserable wretch. Pierre Vidal- Naquet and the Klarsfelds are cut from a different cloth.

These are people who had time enough to determine just how empty-headed their "suburban pharmacist" was. They used him nonetheless. But could they have found better? In any case they have brought discredit on their cause. Now they are burdened with this monstrous book, totally unusable, and

nothing to be done about it. Let any journalist in search of a scoop ask them, as did Richard Bernstein of the *New York Times*, to point out a single page or a single photograph in this wearisome tome which rebuts the Revisionists: Vidal-Naquet and the Klarsfelds will be unable to offer anything at all.

I see hardly anyone but the Revisionists showing interest in Pressac and his masterwork, and then only as scientists would do, musing over a phenomenon of teratology, a monster. The "Holocaust" religion has certainly given birth to more than one monstrosity; Jean-Claude Pressac's misshapen work is one example.

In his paper presented at IHR's Fourth International Revisionist Conference in 1982 ("Context and Perspective in the 'Holocaust' Controversy," reproduced as "Supplement B" in recent editions of *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, p. 335-369), Arthur Butz put the Revisionists on guard against one danger: that of wasting their time in idle technical discussions that make us fail to see the forest for the trees. If we become preoccupied with such details as Zyklon B or crematory ovens, we may end up forgetting the essential point, which is that an extermination so gigantic would have left behind a superabundance of physical and documentary proofs, not merely infinitesimal traces of domestic tinkering and puttering. Our adversaries, Butz added, will seek to enmesh us in cabalistic discussions since, on the level of establishing basic facts, they know they've already lost. As Butz also pointed out, however, a Revisionist must nonetheless show himself capable of confronting the cabalists right down to trifling details. Whatever the ground chosen, the defenders of the "Holocaust" thesis must realize that all avenues of escape are closed to them. It is thus that they find themselves today in a total impasse. Their gang plank to safety—Pressac's book—is made of rotted wood.

The Jewish community has had some bad shepherds. It should have jettisoned the dogma of the Auschwitz gas chamber a decade ago. In December 1978, *Le Monde* published, at the same time as my article on "The Rumor of Auschwitz," several articles which were supposed to refute me. I think that certain French academics, of Jewish origin, immediately perceived that a grave event had just occurred: in a few lines, I had just reminded them, like previous Revisionists, that the emperor was wearing no clothes. Confronted with this, a group of Establishment historians

endeavored, in vain, to pretend the contrary. On 16 January 1979, *Le Monde* published my "right of response." That would have been a fitting time, I think, for the Franco-Jewish academics to have urgently prepared a "declaration of historians" stating that there *could* and *must* be a debate on the existence or nonexistence of the Auschwitz gas chambers.

Fate decided otherwise. On 21 February 1979, then, appeared, the "declaration" drawn up by Pierre Vidal-Naquet and Léon Poliakov. By it the Exterminationists ratified their ruin. Ten years later, with this book by Jean-Claude Pressac, they are reaping the fruits of their blindness. They appear to me to have been inspired by an altogether too narrow conception of their self-interest. They ought to have looked farther ahead, to have given thought to their obligations as historians and to the interest, truly understood, of the Jewish community. Then, instead of dogging the heretics with press campaigns, physical attacks, and the police and the courts; instead of staging one incestuous colloquium after another; instead of churning out an endless stream of bad books (Pressac's being the worst), they ought to have opened their minds and hearts to discussion and reflection.

They would have done well to have done some work.

The Revisionists have been at work. It's a pity the Exterminationists haven't followed their lead.[19]

APPENDIX I

Pressac Versus the Leuchter Report

At the end of 1988, Serge Klarsfeld published, in *Jour J/La Lettre télégraphique juive*, a study by Pressac of the Leuchter Report. The title was: "Les carences et les incohérences du "Rapport Leuchter" ("The Deficiencies and Inconsistencies of the "Leuchter Report").

"Deficiencies" and "Inconsistencies": Pressac is a master there! The sole proof he could find of homicidal gassings in *Krema I* he owes to . . . this report (see Part I, p. 34, in *The Journal of Historical Review*, Spring 1991)! His study, plainly hurried, mixes blends emotive reflections about Fred Leuchter with an exposition on the Auschwitz gassings, a summary on the Auschwitz crematory ovens, and a final discussion on Majdanek. On Auschwitz, he repeats what I call his theory of "molecules with homing devices" (see Part I, p. 38-39 in *The Journal of Historical Review*), a theory which tries to explain

the absence, so embarrassing for Pressac, of ferric-ferrocyanide stains there where so many human beings were supposedly gassed.

About Majdanek, I believe it's not too much to say that Pressac does not believe in the existence of homicidal gas chambers in this camp. He writes:

> Lacking any precise technical study, those gas chambers remain poorly known (p. vii);
>
> The use of [such places] as homicidal gas chambers with HCN appears difficult and remains risky [. . .]; the technique would seem possible, but an actual use is risky (p. viii);
>
> [There were some] modifications [. . .] after 1945 [which give a] false impression (p. ix);
>
> a regrettable confusion during the 1950s results in the shower room often being presented as a homicidal gas chamber (with toxic gas thought to be dispersed through shower heads)[20] (*Ibid.*);
>
> The use of this place for homicidal purposes is only conceivable under two conditions: the removal of a fanlight that could have been broken by the victims and the addition of a mechanical ventilator (*Ibid.*);[21]
>
> the homicidal function which the author [Pressac] cannot presently discuss (*Ibid.*);
>
> the deputy director of the Museum told the author [Pressac] that this gas chamber had very, very seldom been used, which really means that it had not been used at all. That fiction is maintained in order not to shock popular belief which wants it that way [. . .] (*Ibid.*);
>
> etc.

In his big book, Pressac manifests the same skepticism. He considers that no one has yet undertaken a "serious study" of the Majdanek gas chambers (p. 184). Writing of Auschwitz, he lets slip a remark that implies that Majdanek was perhaps not really "criminal" (p. 218). Denouncing the methods of the "officials of the Majdanek Museum," he writes:

> I am sorry to say, and I am not the only one in the West, that the Majdanek homicidal and/or delousing gas chambers are still waiting for a true historian, which is mildly upsetting in view of the fact that the camp fell into the hands of the Russians intact in 1944 (p. 555).

On page 557, a photograph shows the exterior of one of the "disinfection gas chambers thought to be a homicidal gas

chamber." The photograph comes from Maître Jouanneau, attorney for LICRA, who was duped, Pressac tells us, by the camp authorities (the lawyer used this photograph before the Paris court to prove that Faurisson was a falsifier denying the historical evidence).

APPENDIX II

How Many Cremations a Day at Krema II?

How many cremations, on the average, were there per day in the five three-muffle crematory ovens of *Krema II*?

To that question, Pressac ought to give one answer and one answer only, but instead he gives at least five, ranging from 288 a day to 1,500 a day.

- First answer: 960 or 288 or 720! Those three contradictory answers all appear on page 110 where, speaking of a German document dated 28 June 1943 which indicates 1,440 cremations per day, he says that this "official" number, even if reduced by a third (which would be 960 cremations), is barely credible; and he adds that, given the SS penchant for boasting, it is better in general to divide their numbers by "a factor of from two to five" to obtain the truth in such matters. So that would give us a minimum of 288 cremations and a maximum of 720 cremations.
- Second answer: 752! This emerges from page 183, where Pressac writes that the *Krema* in question "functioned as a homicidal gas chamber and incineration installation from 15th March 1943, before its officially coming into service on 31st March, to 27th November 1944, annihilating a total of approximately 400,000 people, most of them Jewish women, children and old men." Pressac does not justify any of his statements. We don't know why he claims that this *Krema* operated in a homicidal manner before 31 March, nor why he declares the final date of operation to have been 27 November 1944, unless because the self-taught Pressac takes at face value the legend that on 26 November 1944 Himmler ordered the slaughter stopped. No matter. Let us take him at his word. From 15 March 1943 to 27 November 1944, there elapsed 624 days, a figure that must be reduced to 532 if we take into account that, because of a repair of its

chimney, *Krema II* is supposed to have halted operations for three months, from May through July of 1943 (p. 227). Over a period of 532 days there would thus have been 400,000 cremations, or 752 per day.

- Third answer: a "practical 'throughput' *being closer to 1,000.*" That is what the author says on page 470 when he judges that the figure of 2,000 cremations that was given by the witness, Dr. Bendel, cannot be accepted (see p. 334).
- Fourth answer: "*between 1,000 to 1,500.*" That is what the author says on page 475 regarding an estimate by Dr. Nyiszli.
- Fifth response: nearly 625. This is derived from page 494, where the author indicates that the number of bodies cremated, according to the witness Henryk Tauber, was about 2,500 per day, concerning which figure he writes: "Here we find the famous multiplication factor of four [of Dr. Miklos Nyiszli]."

In sum, Pressac gives completely divergent answers in this matter; his estimates of the cremations per day in *Krema II*, in ascending order, are as follows:

288, 625, 720, 752, 960, 1,000, and between 1,000 and 1,500.

This *Krema* had 15 muffles, and the crematory ovens, Pressac admits, functioned only 12 hours a day. For each muffle, therefore, the per day would have been, respectively, 19, 42, 48, 50, 64, and from 67 to 100. These figures, varying from 19 to 100 per day, would represent performances beyond the capabilities of our most modern crematoria. They are all the more unacceptable when we consider that Pressac is counting only the corpses of those who are supposed to have been "gassed," to which must be added the cremations of bodies of the inmates, guards, and soldiers who died every day of various causes, especially when typhus was raging in the camp.

APPENDIX III

Pressac's Tricks in the *Auschwitz Album*

In 1983, Pressac and Klarsfeld jointly published a French edition of what is called the *Auschwitz Album* (translated from English by Guy Casaril, Editions du Seuil, 1983, 224 p.). It was

a collection of 189 extremely interesting photos, taken in 1944 by a German from the photographic staff of the Auschwitz camp—possibly Ernst Hoffmann. No one, whether Exterminationist or Revisionist, has contested the authenticity or the veracity of these photographs, which were taken at the time of the mass arrivals of Hungarian Jews in 1944. These photographs supply a providential confirmation of the Revisionist thesis, and it is shocking that we had to wait until the early 1980's to see all of them published. Serge Klarsfeld, embarrassed by what they revealed, could offer but a single parry in response: fabricating a moving account of the pretended discovery of the album by a certain Lili Meier.

Klarsfeld and Pressac went to even greater lengths for the French edition of this album. In a twenty-page typed analysis which I completed in December 1983, but did not publish at that time for lack of money, I described their subterfuges. I showed that in the French edition, which I compared with the two original editions published in the United States[22], Pressac had drastically changed the original order of the album's sections, an order which had reflected a logical sequence of events for the newly arrived inmates of the Birkenau camp. In place of that order, our man had substituted an arrangement which would give one to understand that most of the people pictured would end up dying in the mysterious homicidal gas chambers. He also changed the number of photographs in each section and proceeded to switch photographs from one section to another! He removed one group of photos and then, to restore the original number of sections, he made use of the same caption from the original twice, but gave it two different translations. I wrote:

> Without breathing a word of it to the reader, Jean-Claude Pressac acted like a pharmacist who would surreptitiously change the contents of his bottles, change their number, and switch their labels, not to mention committing two forgeries in the process (p. 7).

But the most spectacular of his manipulations was to be found on pages 42 and 43 of the *Album*. Under the title "The Trickeries of the *Auschwitz Album*," I circulated a short piece devoted to that deceit. I did not fail to send a copy of it to Editions du Seuil. Here is what our pharmacist had devised: in order to try to make us believe that the route taken by certain groups of deportees (women and children) ended at *Krema II*

and *III* and therefore, according to him, in the homicidal gas chambers, he had provided, on page 42 of the *Album*, a plan of Birkenau from which he had made a careful deletion to prevent the reader from seeing that in reality these groups of deportees actually passed between the two *Krema*, staying on the road leading to the large shower and disinfection center called the *Zentral Sauna* until their arrival there. Caught red-handed, Pressac followed a policy of silence for the next six years (1983-1989). To those who had read my article and stubbornly demanded an explanation from him, even to the point of telephoning him, his answer was to feign ignorance: he claimed he knew nothing of my article. Now, with the publication of his big book, he is forced to provide an explanation; by doing so he just makes his case worse.

The plan in which he deceptively made a cut in the route to the *Zentral Sauna* is reproduced on page 421 of his big book. On pages 514 and 515, he tries to explain. He begins by saying that in 1983 he had easily been able to answer my criticism "in an article whose publication was not deemed necessary." He does not reveal to us who decided not to publish it, and why. I suggest that Pressac's answer was quite simply judged dreadful. If I allow myself that suggestion, it is because the response that he finally consents to give us in 1989 in his big book is pathetic and *proves his trickery*. Pressac answers in effect that, in order to draw the plan for which I reproached him, he had used "as a *basis* [emphasis added]" (p. 515) an authentic plan: plan 3764 (p. 514). I don't doubt it: he did take that "as a basis" and *added* to it lines representing the avenues in and around the camp, but taking great care to . . . truncate the route leading to the *Zentral Sauna*, in order to make us believe that the Jewish women and children who took that route could go no farther than the crematoria. The deletion is flagrant. The subterfuge is obvious.

But there's more. In the original version of the *Auschwitz Album*, the American edition, there was a photograph which may be described as follows: in the foreground, a group of four elderly Jews, three men and a woman, are plainly having an altercation, while in the background, indifferent to the scene, a scattered few German soldiers, wearing garrison caps, are walking by. This is photograph 109. Pressac, deciding to make this photograph "speak," moves it to the 189th and last place in the sequence, where it is supposed to

mark the acme of the extermination horror. And here, in his usual jargon, is the explanation of the photograph:

> That photo is unique, terrible, and to be added to the file on the extermination of the Jews as evidence for the prosecution [. . .]. The footpath down which this woman is refusing to go ends at the door of [*Krema*] V, leading to the disrobing room and the gas chambers. If the three men who are dragging her do not seem to suspect the fate that awaits them, she knows that the building which she is turning away from, that red brick building with its black roof and its two 16 meter-high chimneys, has become the negation of life and stinks of death (*Auschwitz Album*, p. 204).

In my 1983 article (p. 9), I observed:

> All that pathos cannot blind us to this: there is no footpath, and we can't predict the direction this or that person might take; [Pressac] tells us nothing about the presence and the indifference, or inattention, of the German soldiers; how could the woman know that she is going to be gassed and the men not know that they are going to be gassed? Finally and above all, *it is plain to see that the woman is trying neither to get away from the man on the right nor to resist him: she is clasping his hand in her own left hand.*

On page 421 of his big book of 1989, the subject of this review, Pressac has altered his commentary on the photograph, writing:

> As for the woman's attitude, it could simply be that she, with no illusions about what is to happen and having seen the SS photographer, suddenly turned away, saying in effect: "I don't want that [bastard of an] SS to photograph me!" Such a reaction would not be surprising, for some of the Jewish children, less polite and more spontaneous than their parents, instinctively feeling that the SS wished them no good, pulled faces at the photographers.

In other words, for one story Pressac substitutes another, and his entire interpretation of the *Auschwitz Album* collapses, since the photograph deemed to represent the acme of horror has been reduced, according to our manipulator himself, to showing us an old woman who . . . doesn't want her picture taken!

Pressac reproaches me for not saying that the scene takes place near *Krema V*. As a matter of fact I did say so, since I quoted his mention of that. And I find it interesting that there is nothing secret about the place: as in many other

photographs, both in that album and in his large work, we see small groups of Jews, Germans and civilian workers all peaceably rubbing elbows with each other.

Pressac leaves unanswered in *Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers* all the other rebukes of his trickery I addressed to him in 1983 apropos the *Auschwitz Album*. He thus compels me to repeat my accusations today.

APPENDIX IV

The Truncated Testimony of Hanna Reitsch

Pressac takes note of the testimony of the German air ace, Hanna (and not Hannah) Reitsch (1912-1979) as though it were evidence of the existence of the gas chambers (p. 486). In reality, Hanna Reitsch, at the end of 1944, saw an Allied pamphlet that mentioned gas chambers; she didn't believe it. *After* the war, she came to believe it. By the end of her life, she no longer believed; Pressac is either ignorant, or pretends not to know, of this last development. The details of the case are interesting.

In October 1944, Peter Riedel, an aviator friend of Miss Reitsch, who was then working in the German Embassy in Stockholm, received an Allied propaganda pamphlet which touched on the gas chambers. Deeply affected, he brought it up to Hanna Reitsch at the "Aviation House" in Berlin. The latter, furious, told him that it was obviously a war propaganda fabrication comparable to the enemy propaganda lies about the Germans during World War I. Riedel urged her to speak to Heinrich Himmler about it. She went to see Himmler, who leafed through the brochure without registering the slightest emotion. He asked her: "And you believe this, Frau Hanna?" She told him no, but added that countering it was imperative. Himmler told her she was right.

Pressac specifies that the English version of Hanna Reitsch's memoirs (*Fliegen—mein Leben*) stops there, but remarks that in the French version the text continues: "A few days later, the information was denied in one of the main German newspapers. I learned from Peter Riedel that the same denial had appeared in a Swedish newspaper. It was only after 1945 that I found out, and with what horror, that Himmler had lied to me, and that the awful news was true."

If Pressac had pursued his investigation a little further, and especially if he had read Gerd Honsik's *Freispruch für Hitler?*

36 ungehörte Zeugen wider die Gaskammer (Acquittal for Hitler? 36 Unheard Witnesses Testify Against the Gas Chambers) (Burgenländischer Kulturverband Wien, Postfach 11, 1142 Vienna, 1988), he could have discovered that (p. 132-138):

1. Himmler also said to Reitsch concerning that Allied accusation: "That [the gassing accusation] is the rope they'll hang us with if we lose"[23];
2. Hanna Reitsch had so far returned to her good sense that at the end of life she supported the efforts of the Revisionists and, in particular, those of an Austrian (whom she called "the courageous Friedl Rainer") "against all the terrible atrocity lies" (letter dated 15 September 1977, reproduced by Gerd Honsik on p. 138 of his book).

According to David Irving, the State of Israel is holding the manuscript of Himmler's memoirs. If that is true, why is this document being shielded from the curiosity of historians and researchers?

Notes

8. See Appendix III, p. 167-171.
9. This order from Höss likewise confirms what I have said about the Höss "confessions" (interview in *Storia Illustrata*, reprinted in Serge Thion, *Vérité historique ou vérité politique?*, La Vieille Taupe, 1980, p. 203, note 10). Höss "confessed" that the members of the *Sonderkommando* entered the "gas chambers" immediately after the "gassing" and pulled out the bodies, eating and smoking all the while—in other words, without wearing gas masks, something which would have been absolutely impossible. On 2 April 1946, in his jail cell at Nuremberg, Höss gave the following answers to his American interrogator, S. Jaari:

   Q: But was it not quite dangerous work for these inmates to go into these chambers and work among the bodies and among the gas fumes?

   A: No.

   Q: Did they wear gas masks?

   A: They had some, but they did not need them, as nothing ever happened. (John Mendelsohn, editor, *The Holocaust*, 1982 vol. 12, page 113; *Pretrial Interrogation of R. Höss*, 2 April 1946, page 17)

   The order of 12 August 1942, signed by Höss and showing the considerable danger of a gassing operation, demonstrates that Höss, when he was interrogated by the Americans four years later at the

Nuremberg jail, gave some rather clumsy answers; he had been broken, as I have also been able to show, by his initial jailers and interrogators: certain Jews from British military security who tortured him before sending him to Nuremberg. Höss feared more than anything being turned over to the Polish Communists (see Robert Faurisson, "How the British Obtained the Confession of Rudolf Höss, Commandant of Auschwitz," *The Journal of Historical Review*, Winter 1986-87, p. 389-403).

10. Hospitals continued to exist in German cities, but to a large extent they were "evacuated" to the countryside where they took the form of medical barracks on the model of those that were built in the concentration camps. On page 513 Pressac reproduces a plan of a hospital barracks at Auschwitz, giving as his source the Center for Contemporary Jewish Documentation in Paris. In fact, this is just another of the many documents he owes to me: it comes from the U.S. National Archives and bears the Nuremberg file number NO-4470.

11. The shame is that during the immediate postwar period this type of "imposed falsehood," or imposture, became law in the exact sense of the word; and today, once again, it carries the force of law for the French courts by virtue of the anti-Revisionist provisions of the Fabius-Gayssot law promulgated, under the signature of François Mitterrand, in the *Journal officiel de la République française* on July 14, 1990.

12. Here Pressac forgets that, according to him, Pressac has also used divisors! And what is the meaning of "almost exactly"? Lending his imprimatur to Pressac's number-cooking, Vidal-Naquet writes: "The fact that today it can be stated that the statistics given in so important a testimony must be divided by four is a scholarly finding that we would be very wrong dismiss. One doesn't diminish the crimes of the Nazis by rejecting false figures. The question of the exact number of victims is not essential. Arno Mayer says this, repeats it, and on this point I can only agree with him." (From Vidal-Naquet's preface to the French edition of Arno Mayer's *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken?: La "Solution finale" dans l'histoire*, ed. La Découverte, 1990, p. viii-ix).

13. On the night of 3 October 1980 an explosion in front of a synagogue on the Rue de Copernic in Paris killed three persons and wounded a dozen more. On 9 May 1990 graves in a Jewish cemetery at Carpentras in the south of France were violated in a particularly lurid manner.

    The French "far right" was accused of having perpetrated both attacks in each instance it was at length admitted that the rightists were blameless. In the Rue Copernic case, it is universally conceded that the attack was carried out by a member of a Palestinian faction. As to the Carpentras incident, numerous articles, even in the Jewish press, have subsequently described how the affair was distorted and blown out of proportion; all agree that the graves were desecrated, not by rightists, but by politically indifferent youths or by Jewish families desirous of "teaching a lesson" to the liberal Jews of Carpentras (the most serious violation was that of the corpse and grave of a Jews who had married a Catholic).

14. It was due precisely to the proximity of the water table that the *Leichenkeller* of *Krema II* and *III*, instead of being completely underground beneath the crematory room proper, were only half below ground, adjacent to the crematory room.

15. Nevertheless, I can reveal here for the first time that at the end of 1978 I considered abandoning all further efforts at publication when I witnessed the ferocity with which the entire press, the academy and the courts denied me so much as the right to carry on a normal life. The Conseil d'Etat went so far as to declare, in October 1978, that I was a university professor with no publications to his credit, and that I had even confessed as much! My isolation was complete. The situation has changed a lot since those heroic days . . .

16. This is the figure of the "traditional historians," as Pressac calls them; Pressac himself gives no clear indications on the matter.

17. "The shift boss (*Vorarbeiter*) wrote in a notebook the number of corpses incinerated per charge and the head of the *Kommando* (Kommandoführer), an SS man, checked these entries" (the testimony of Henryk Tauber, according to Pressac, p. 495).

18. The book opens with an impressive lists of patrons, beginning with "the Commission of the European Communities; the Socialist Group of the European Parliament; Mrs. Simone Veil, former President of the European Parliament" (p. 8), as well as political figures such as Jacques Delors.

19. See Appendix III, p. 167-171.

20. As we have remarked, Pressac's book constitutes a godsend for the Revisionists. The latter have already produced several reviews, and are working on more:

—Mark Weber, "*Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers*, by Jean-Claude Pressac," *The Journal of Historical Review*, Summer 1990, p. 231- 237;

—Jack Wikoff, "*Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers*, by Jean-Claude Pressac," *Remarks* (P.O. Box 234, Aurora, NY 13026), p. 1-9;

—Carlo Mattogno, "Jean-Claude Pressac and the War Refugee Board," *The Journal of Historical Review*, Winter 1990-91, p. 461-485;

—Enrique Aynat Eknes, "Neither Trace Nor Proof: The Seven Auschwitz "Gassing" Sites," see this issue of *The Journal of Historical Review*, p. 177.

The magazine *Instauration* has announced its attention to publish an article on the Pressac book. I suppose that eventually Fritz Berg will publish his ideas. Berg is the author of three important technical studies, all published in *The Journal of Historical Review*: "The Diesel Gas Chambers: Myth Within a Myth" (Spring 1984, p. 15-46); "The German Delousing Chambers" (Spring 1986, p. 73-94); "Typhus and the Jews" (Winter 1988-89, p. 480-481). It is thanks to Berg's savoir-faire that I was able to get a copy of Pressac's book in January 1990.

21. Which, in plain English, means that this place could not have been a homicidal gas chamber since it did have a fanlight and since it lacked ventilation of any kind.

22. 1) *The Auschwitz Album/ Lili Jacob's Album*, edited by Serge Klarsfeld, mimeographed, distributed, "free of charge, to more than 1,000 libraries and Jewish organizations" [S. Klarsfeld, August 5, 1980]. 2) *The Auschwitz Album/ A Book Based upon an Album Discovered by a Concentration Camp Survivor, Lili Meier*, text by Peter Hellman, New York, Random House, 1981.

23. Compare the report of Norbert Masur, an official of the Swedish branch of the World Jewish Congress, who met Himmler on 21 April 1945, a few days before the end of the war. They had a long conversation. Heinrich Himmler told Masur: "In order to contain the epidemics, we were forced to build crematoria where we could burn the corpses of countless people who passed away because of these diseases [typhus]. And now, they want to put a noose around our necks" (Norbert Masur, "My Meeting with Henirich Himmler," *Moment* [a Jewish monthly magazine published in Boston], December 1985, page 51, which is a partial translation from the Swedish book *Ein Jude Talar med Himmler* [A Jew Talks with Himmler], Stockholm, Albert Bonniers Vorlag, 1945).

(*continued from page 132*)

Further evidence of the implacable advance of Holocaust Revisionism is provided by a translation into English—the first to be published in America—of a forensic report on the purported Auschwitz gas chambers, undertaken by the Institute of Forensic Research in Krakow, Poland, at the request of the authorities of the Auschwitz State Museum. This translation, the result of the efforts of several technical experts with native fluency in Polish, whose efforts were coordinated and checked by *JHR* Associate Editor Mark Weber, gives implicit corroboration to the findings of gas-chamber expert Fred Leuchter in 1989, as presented in the *Leuchter Report*, the first expert, quantitative study of the alleged gas chambers at Auschwitz. Furthermore, as the director of Krakow institute, Professor Dr. Jan Markiewicz, confirms in a letter to the Institute for Historical Review which appears immediately following the translation of the report, the Polish investigation was undertaken in response to Leuchter's famous report. The IHR and *The Journal* welcome Prof. Dr. Markiewicz's cordial response to our inquiry, and hope that it augurs a determination on the part of honest scholars in Poland and elsewhere in the former Soviet bloc to cooperate with Revisionists in working to bring history into accord with the facts in a spirit of civility, tolerance and objectivity sadly lacking in academic circles in the West.

Next, Mark Weber has delved again into the Second World War's tawdry soap story, the lie that the Germans made soap from human remains, chiefly those of Jews. As Weber shows in this study, to our knowledge the most thorough yet of the soap canard, its obvious derivation from similar propaganda lies of the First World War did not prevent Jewish organizations, and then Allied governments, from giving it the seal of authenticity in the press and at Nuremberg. Of particular value is Weber's demonstration of the bad faith underlying recent attempts by historians who subscribe to the orthodox version of the Holocaust to distance themselves from the soap lie by representing it as nothing more than a "rumor," rather than the "established fact" (by the International Military Tribunal) that it, most embarrassingly for them, has been since 1946.

Revisionists themselves often make, as well as revise, history. Making history has mostly been the province of such active researchers and combatants as, for instance, Robert Faurisson, Ernst Zündel, and Fred Leuchter, but every once in a while it falls to someone at the Institute itself to play a role, as did IHR Director Tom Marcellus in the first Mermelstein suit. Since the recent docudrama *Never Forget*, Ted Turner's TNT distortion of the suit and its settlement, gave Director Marcellus (among IHR's staffers) the lion's

(*continued on page 249*)

Neither Trace Nor Proof: The Seven Auschwitz "Gassing" Sites According to Jean-Claude Pressac

ENRIQUE AYNAT
Translated by Tom Kerr

The French author Jean-Claude Pressac has written a monumental work—564 pages in large format, with hundreds of photographs, plans, sketches, drawings and reproduced documents—on the creation, utilization and destruction of seven Auschwitz-Birkenau installations which supposedly once housed execution gas chambers.

J.C. Pressac carried out an exhaustive on-site investigation. During the course of fifteen visits between 1979 and 1987, he spent some three months in Oswiecim (the present name of Auschwitz). He had complete freedom of research in the State Museum of Auschwitz, as well as the full collaboration of the museum authorities, in particular that of the chief archivist, Tadeusz Iwaszko, to whom his book is dedicated. Pressac further obtained the support of Beate and Serge Klarsfeld, who wrote the introduction to his book and who conducted research for him in the archives of the USSR and the German Democratic Republic.

Pressac's book is ostensibly a "scientific rebuttal of those who deny the gas chambers" (p. 12) and is in effect directed against the Revisionists, whom he describes as "maniacs who spend their lives trying to demonstrate that something never existed" (p. 16). Despite his pretensions to cold objectivity, the author's animosity towards the Revisionists is in constant evidence throughout the book. He goes so far as to assert that the judicial actions brought against Revisionists, which he himself admits "smacked of witchhunting" (p. 556), are the only "defensive option open to the people who felt they were being 'attacked' by Faurisson's thesis" (p. 556).

The present piece does not pretend to be an exhaustive critique of Pressac's voluminous work; that would require a book of the same dimensions. This article will deal briefly with

the supposed execution gas chambers which, according to Pressac, were to be found in seven distinct locations in Auschwitz-Birkenau (Crematoria I, II, III, IV and V, and Bunkers 1 and 2) and which he claims killed a million Jews. My article focusses in particular on Pressac's arguments concerning the "technique" and "operation" of the gas chambers, which are precisely the aspects that figure in the title of his work.

In fine, the aim of my article has been to ascertain whether or not Pressac's book provides anything at all with which to shore up the faltering thesis that there were execution gas chambers at Auschwitz. We must emphasize the great importance of the French author's work in this connection, since if the answer to the above question is no, it would be clear that, 44 years after the war, and after examination of all available documentation, there exists no single solid or valid piece of evidence establishing the reality of any such homicidal installations.

Crematorium I of Auschwitz

Crematorium I was installed for the purpose of incinerating the corpses of inmates who died of natural causes, a matter, therefore, of a sanitary installation. According to the official thesis, at the end of 1941 the mortuary of this crematorium was transformed into an execution gas chamber.

Pressac acknowledges that there are very few German documents relating to Crematorium I and that none of them provides any formal proof of homicidal gassings in its mortuary. So that "as evidence to establish the reality of homicidal gassing there remain only the testimonies of the participants" (p. 123).

The testimonies selected by Pressac to prove the existence of a homicidal gas chamber in Crematorium I are as follows:

a) Alter Fajnzylberg, a former prisoner at Auschwitz and a member of the *Sonderkommando* (a group of prisoners charged with transporting and incinerating the corpses).

In his statement made in 1945, after the liberation of Auschwitz by the Soviets, this witness made no allusion to a gas chamber. According to Fajnzylberg, the place where it was supposedly to be found was a "mortuary" (Leichenhalle) which in fact served for storing corpses and also on occasion for the execution of prisoners by means of firearms.

Moreover, in the brief text reproduced by Pressac (p.124), there are two gross errors relating to the dimensions of the place and the capacity of the crematory ovens. These errors, as the French author himself admits, demonstrate "the general tendency to exaggerate at that time (in the years 1945-50)" (p. 126).

In a new statement made before a notary in 1980, Fajnzylberg declared that he "saw" a gassing in the *Leichenhalle* of the crematorium, even though a bit further on he contradicts himself by admitting that he and his companions had been locked up in a coke bunker (pp. 124-125). In this declaration, Fajnzylberg repeated exactly the same dimensions for the gas chamber that he had given in 1945, which for Pressac is "a proof of the sincerity and authenticity of his statements" (p. 126).

b) Filip Müller, former prisoner of Auschwitz and member of the *Sonderkommando.*

In the brief commentary that Pressac devotes to Müller's testimony (pp. 126-127), the supposed gas chamber is not even mentioned. Instead, what merits the author's attention is the statement of the witness regarding the cross-section of the crematorium chimney. Reading Pressac's text, we derive the following:

—F. Müller stated that the chimney was circular in cross-section.

—The German documents indicate that the chimney was square in cross-section.

—Despite that, F. Müller "is a valuable witness" (p. 127).

Most important to emphasize, however, are the opinions that Pressac himself holds with regard to F. Müller:

—"Filip Müller is an important witness, but in choosing to describe material and precise facts in a book and in 1979 (1st German edition) he has accumulated errors, thus making his account historically dubious. The best approach is to read it as a novel based on true history" (p. 181).

—". . . Filip Müller's account was recorded too late and included involuntary errors and embellishments, and perhaps even lies . . ." (p. 380).

After taking the foregoing into account, I find it incomprehensible that Pressac should have presented this

witness "as evidence to establish the reality of homicidal gassing."

c) Rudolf Höss, the first commander of Auschwitz.

In the memoirs written during his captivity in Poland, R. Höss stated that he had been present at the gassing of 900 Russian war prisoners in the mortuary of Crematorium I. Höss explains that while the trucks were unloading, a number of holes were made in the stone and concrete walls of the morgue."[1] These details seem "unlikely" to Pressac (p. 127). Actually, to maintain that it was possible to put 900 people in the 78.2 square meters of the gas chamber and that holes for introducing poison gas were drilled at top speed through the 10-to-15-centimeter-thick concrete walls while the victims were getting off the trucks goes beyond rationality. But Pressac attempts to justify Höss's statement in the following manner:

> Höss participated in the "special actions" strictly in accordance with the almost insurmountable tasks imposed by the exponential growth of his camp, thus not allowing his conscience to dwell on the moral questions. *He was present, without seeing.* In the author's opinion, this attitude explains the involuntary errors found throughout his autobiography (p. 128, emphasis in the original).

Against Pressac's attempted justification, we may advance the following objections:

—Höss himself stated in his memoirs that:

> the prisoners were killed by means of gas in the cells of block 11. I was present at the scene, protected by a gas mask. So great was the crowding in the cells that the gas had hardly entered before the victims died. A brief half-smothered scream and it was all over. I was perhaps too moved by this first sight of killing with gas to become clearly and fully aware of what I was seeing. On the other hand, I remember *with the greatest exactness* the way in which, a bit later, the nine hundred Russians were killed with gas [in Crematorium I][2] (emphasis added).

—Elsewhere in his memoirs, R. Höss repeats 900 as the number of Russians gassed.[3]

—No less untenable is the thesis that R. Höss was so occupied with the tasks deriving from expansion of the camp that he lost his capacity for observation. Höss himself says that it would be:

> . . . a mistake to imagine that taking part in this extermination, with everything that it involved, was accepted as an ordinary happening, like any other. With very few exceptions, all those who took part in it, and I most of all, came away with indelible impressions and plenty of material for reflection.[4]

Furthermore, exterminating Jews was the most important of all the tasks entrusted to R. Höss, and it could scarcely take second place to work proceeding from expansion of the camp. As a matter of fact, it was Himmler in person who had given him the order: "It is you who will take over the task. It is a tough and painful job that awaits you: put your whole being into it and the difficulties that present themselves will be as nothing."[5]

Consequently, Pressac's justification of Höss's testimony, teeming as it is with these incongruities, is just not convincing.

In any event, the important thing here is that Pressac offers as, proof of the existence of a homicidal gas chamber in Crematorium I, testimony containing at least two obvious falsehoods. In the last analysis, it should suffice to point out that if R. Höss was in reality present "without seeing," why is he presented as a witness?

d) Pery Broad, former member of the SS garrison of Auschwitz.

Pressac acknowledges that the testimony of this one-time SS member "raises problems yet to be solved" (p. 128). Specifically, "the form and tone of his declaration sound false. His writings can not be the faithful reflection of the thoughts of an SS man and indeed reading them gives the impression that they were written by a former prisoner" (p. 128). It is Pressac's opinion that Pery Broad's declaration "has been 'slightly' reworked by the Poles" (p. 128, quotation marks in the original). Should any doubts remain, Pressac later on hammers home the point:

> *"Historically, this account is not exploitable in its present version* [. . .] After assessing its reliability, no conscientious historian will be able to use it unless and until the 'declaration' has been stripped of the Polish influence, or in other words until the original is published" (p. 162, emphasis in the original).

Why Pressac, the above reservation notwithstanding, has offered this testimony as proof of the existence of a homicidal gas chamber, remains to this writer an enigma.

To sum up, Pressac acknowledges that there is no documentary evidence to establish a homicidal gassing in the supposed gas chamber of Crematorium I of Auschwitz. In lieu of that, the French author provides the testimonies of four witnesses. These testimonies, however, all either show "the general tendency to exaggerate at that time" (A. Fajnzylberg); include "involuntary errors and embellishments, and perhaps even lies" (F. Müller); come from someone who "was present, without seeing" (R. Höss); or "have been 'slightly' reworked by the Poles" so that they are not serviceable in their present version (P. Broad).

The conclusion follows that, insofar as concerns the sources provided by Pressac, the existence of a homicidal gas chamber in Crematorium I of Auschwitz must be considered historically unfounded.

Lastly, Pressac offers the results of the chemical analysis of samples taken by the American engineer Fred Leuchter[6] in the supposed gas chamber of Crematorium I as proof of the practice of homicidal gassings (p. 133). Leuchter had found in 6 of the 7 samples a trace presence of cyanide.[7] To be sure, our author ought to have pointed out that the report of the American engineer categorically denies the existence of any execution gas chamber either in Crematorium I of Auschwitz or in the four crematoria of Birkenau. The most important thing to be emphasized, however, is that Leuchter took one of his samples in an area that had been a washroom, which had never been part of the supposed gas chamber, and was separated from it by a gas-tight door. The partition wall that separated the washroom from the supposed gas chamber was eliminated by the Poles after the war. The analysis of this sample reveals a presence of cyanide *comparable* to that of most of the other samples. In short, the amount of cyanide found in a sample taken from a place that had *never* served as a gas chamber was *similar* to that detected in the samples taken from the supposed gas chamber. If the mortuary had really been a gas chamber, cyanide ought to have been detected in the samples taken from there, and by the same token nothing should have been detected in the sample obtained from the former washroom; or rather a minute amount of cyanide should have been found in the former

washroom (from contingent disinfestation with hydrocyanic acid) and a much larger quantity in the gas chamber. What proves to be inexplicable from the Exterminationist point of view is the finding of *similar* amounts of cyanide in both places.

Therefore, and contrary to what Pressac tells us, the results of the Leuchter report constitute solid evidence of the *nonexistence* of a gas chamber in Crematorium I of Auschwitz.

Bunker 1

As Pressac himself acknowledges, there remain no ruins, and neither documents nor plans of this supposed installation with its homicidal gas chamber. Consequently, the "information that has reached us on this provisional installation is scanty and based only on the testimonies of the few survivors" (p. 162).

Pressac cites six testimonies. Four of them come from former prisoners (Szlam Dragon, Maurice Benroubi, Milton Buki and Moshe Garbarz) and two from members of the SS (Pery Broad and Rudolf Höss).

Let us first look at the description of the supposed homicidal installation given us by the witnesses.

a) S. Dragon: "a small brick house divided into just two parts and able to contain altogether 2,000 naked persons. These rooms each had one entrance door and a small window" (p. 161).

b) P. Broad: according to Pressac, P. Broad never described Bunker 1 (p. 165).

c) M. Benroubi: "There were two big concrete blocks [the buildings known as 'Bunker 1'—Pressac's note] at least 20 m. wide and perhaps as many long [. . .] One morning, the doors of the Bunkers, as they called them, were open. I noticed that there were shower heads and along the wall clothes hooks" (p. 162).

Further on he indicates that the "Bunker was a brick-built house, with the windows filled in" (p. 163).

d) M. Buki: the Bunker was "a brick farmhouse" (p. 163). The lethal gas was introduced through "a little chimney" (p. 164).

e) M. Garbarz: "a sort of barn closed on three sides, identical to those where our farmers keep the hay" (p. 164).

f) R. Höss: "All the rooms—there were five in all—were filled at the same time; the airtight doors were locked with a key, and the contents of the cans of gas were put in through the skylights.

"At the end of half an hour, the doors were opened—there were two in each room—and the dead were removed and taken to the ditches."[8]

Bunker 1 could hold 800 persons.[9]

Contradictions abound in these testimonies. Thus, regarding its exterior aspect, Bunker 1 was:

—"a small brick house" (S. Dragon)

—"two [?] big concrete blocks" (M. Benroubi)

—"a sort of barn closed on three sides" (M. Garbarz).

And as for its capacity, it had room for:

—2,000 persons (S. Dragon)

—800 persons (R. Höss).

The lethal agent was introduced:

—through "a small window" in every gas chamber, according to S. Dragon, even though the plan of this installation made on the basis of his testimony has two windows in each chamber (p. 161).

—"through a little chimney" (M. Buki).

Bunker 1 had:

—two gas chambers (S. Dragon)

—five gas chambers (R. Höss).

The gas chambers had:

—one door each (S. Dragon)

—two doors each (R. Höss).

Pressac concludes by affirming that the purpose of Bunker 1, "the extermination of human beings by gassing, cannot be called into question, if only because of the constant repetition of an identical process in the accounts of former prisoners, unless like certain Revisionists of bad faith we claim that the witnesses were all lying, including the SS" (p. 165).

This conclusion can not be defended. In the first place, the testimonies of the former prisoners all share a great vagueness. We can scarcely speak of "an identical process" when Pressac himself admits that it "is impossible to make a

synthesis of all these accounts" (p. 165). Secondly, the Revisionists do not say that the witnesses lie in every case. It is enough for them to observe that some testimonies, like that of P. Broad (as Pressac himself acknowledges), have been "'slightly' reworked by the Poles."

In short, as authority for the existence and functioning of a gas chamber in Bunker 1, Pressac provides only six testimonies. These testimonies are generally very vague, and when by exception they are specific on some point or another, contradictions arise. Ergo, based on the sources provided by Pressac, it is not possible in the case of Bunker 1 to maintain the historic reality of any execution gas chambers.

Bunker 2

According to the official thesis, Bunker 2 was a farmhouse in which a number of homicidal gas chambers had been installed. It was in operation from the summer of 1942 until the spring of 1943. In the summer of 1944 it was again put into operation in order to assist in the extermination of the Hungarian Jews.

Pressac cites the following testimonies in his treatment of Bunker 2:

a) Szlam Dragon, considered the principal witness by the French author.

In 1945 Dragon described Bunker 2 as "a cottage covered with thatch, its windows bricked in [. . .] The interior of the cottage was divided into four parts by partition walls running across it, one of which could contain 1,200 naked people, the second 700, the third 400 and the fourth 200 to 250" (p. 171).

Two items in the testimony, the interior division and the capacity, are demolished by Pressac himself. With regard to the number of rooms, the French author exhibits a reconstruction of Bunker 2 based on the actual ruins which clearly shows *eight* of these rooms (pp. 174 and 175). With reference to the number of persons put into the Bunker, from 2,500 to 2,550, Pressac reckons that a physically impossible density of 28 persons per square meter (Bunker 2 had an area of 90 square meters) and thus believes that the witness was following "the tendency to exaggerate which seems to have been the general rule at the time of the liberation" (p. 171).

Nonetheless, 27 years later, in 1972, S. Dragon again testified in a celebrated trial against two former SS men, and

his declaration was so disordered (he confused the Bunker with a crematorium) that the session had to be interrupted. Pressac justifies this by saying that the "intervening time had done its work, a blessing for the witness, a disaster for justice and for History. I have added this anecdote to show the irreplaceable value of early testimony. Afterwards, witnesses constantly go over the same story, altering it as the years go by" (p. 172).

In short, Pressac finds it easy to justify the errors, falsehoods and absurdities of the testimonies. If the latter are from the immediate postwar period, they demonstrate "the tendency to exaggerate" characteristic of that era; but if they were given many years later, it turns out that time has altered the memory of the witnesses. Moreover, it is not to be understood that Pressac is alluding to the "irreplaceable value of early testimony" when he has just said that it suffers from a "tendency to exaggerate."

b) Pery Broad.

Even though Pressac had made clear that the account of this former member of the SS "is not exploitable in its present version" (p. 162), he does not hesitate to "exploit it" now and again.

c) Rudolf Höss.

There is only one reference in the memoirs of R. Höss to Bunker 2: "Bunker 2 was the larger and could hold about 1200 people" (p. 174). This information is refuted by Pressac himself when he says that the stated capacity corresponded to 13 persons per square meter, "a physically impossible density" (p. 174).

d) Miklos Nyiszli, a Hungarian Jewish doctor deported to Auschwitz.

Dr. Nyiszli's declaration makes reference to the functioning of Bunker 2 in its final stage, during the summer of 1944. In contradiction to all the other testimonies, Dr. Nyiszli affirms that there were no gas chambers in Bunker 2, but rather a dressing room where the people who were going to be shot and incinerated in an adjacent trench could leave their clothes (p. 177). Despite that, Pressac acknowledges the "validity" of Dr. Nyiszli's account (p. 179).

e) David Olère, former prisoner of Auschwitz.

Pressac reproduces a sketch by D. Olère showing the

operation of Bunker 2 as a gas chamber in the summer of 1944.

Pressac admits that the little hill that appears in the sketch is fictitious and was introduced by the witness "for artistic reasons only" (p. 178). One notices as well that although this is supposedly a summer scene, the SS men are wearing overcoats. Nonetheless, for our author the scene is "of such remarkable precision as to be almost as good as a photograph" (p. 178).

We need to call attention to a contradiction that Pressac falls into here: the scene sketched by D. Olère, which represents, so to speak, the prolegomenon to a homicidal gassing, is of photographic fidelity; at the same time, Dr. Nyiszli's description, which is contemporaneous with that of Olère and yet reflects a totally different extermination procedure, is also valid.

f) Filip Müller.

Here it will suffice to reiterate Pressac's opinion of this witness: "Filip Müller is an important witness, but in choosing to describe material and precise facts in a book and in 1979 (1st German edition) he has accumulated errors, thus making his account historically dubious" (p. 181).

Conclusion: as in the two previous cases, it is not possible to establish historically the existence of a homicidal gas installation at Bunker 2 on the basis of the testimonies provided by author Pressac.

Crematoria II and III of Birkenau

The official thesis holds that an execution gas chamber was in operation in Crematorium II from March of 1943 until November of 1944, and that in Crematorium III, the former's twin, there was likewise a homicidal gas chamber, which operated from June of 1943 to November of 1944. According to Pressac, around 750,000 Jews, three fourths of the victims of Auschwitz, were murdered and cremated in these two installations.

The initial plan for one of these crematoria was laid out in November of 1941. A normal crematorium, with no criminal implications, was contemplated (p. 183). Later, the Germans presumably made the decision to construct two of these crematoria, but to modify them for criminal purposes by converting one of their underground mortuaries (*Leichenkeller*

2) into a dressing room where the victims would disrobe, and the other (*Leichenkeller* 1) into an execution gas chamber (p. 184). This decision was supposedly made at the end of June of 1942. According to Pressac:

> 30th June 1942 marks a turning point in the history of Birkenau, for while there may have been some extermination of Jews before this, it was on an ad hoc and totally improvised basis, whereas henceforth it was to be carried out on an industrial basis (p.184).

And yet the true "turning point" in the history of Auschwitz surely came about *a year before that*, on the 29th of July of 1941, when R. Höss, the first commander of Auschwitz, supposedly received the order to exterminate the Jews.[10] Contrary to what Pressac says, the extermination of the Jews was not carried out in a makeshift way before June of 1942. Quite the contrary, after receiving the order to exterminate the Jews, R. Höss immediately set about planning the procedure to be followed together with a high SS functionary and specialist on the Jewish question, Adolf Eichmann. Höss had anticipated that "multitudes," "considerable masses" and "massive convoys" of Jews would be annihilated in Auschwitz. It was agreed that a farmhouse near Birkenau (Bunker 1) would be "especially appropriate for the purpose in question."[11] A little later Höss sent Himmler "a detailed plan of the site and an exact description of the projected installations."[12] Himmler gave this his approval.[13] All of this, according to the context, occurred between August and November of 1941.

So we have the Germans on the one hand making preparations to annihilate great masses of Jews in an installation specifically got ready for the purpose (Bunker 1) and on the other hand designing a large crematorium without criminal intent. Pressac's thesis thus brings us to the paradox that on June 30, 1942 the Germans decided to change over from a "makeshift" extermination, which they were carrying out in an installation specially set up for mass killing, to an "industrial" extermination that they would carry out in crematoria conceived with no criminal purpose.

Pressac's thesis leads, moreover, to another paradox. It is known that the Germans built crematoria to incinerate corpses and thereby avoid the less hygienic burial process, which could facilitate the spread of epidemics. Yet they

envisioned burial for the victims of Bunker 1.[14] Thus, the Germans had planned on a crematorium to incinerate the comparatively small number of prisoners who died of natural causes, and at the same time they omitted this hygienic measure for the presumably much larger number of corpses which would result from the extermination by poison gas.

On the other hand, Crematoria II and III had been planned with three basement mortuaries (*Leichenkeller*) each, in which the dead were kept prior to cremation. Pressac assumes these mortuaries were employed as follows:

> a) Leichenkeller 3 was to be the reception morgue, where the prison numbers of the corpses would be recorded;
>
> b) Leichenkeller 2 was to be temporary storage for newly arrived and recorded corpses awaiting cremation (delay of 3 or 4 days);
>
> c) Leichenkeller 1 was to take corpses several days old, beginning to decompose and thus requiring the room to be well ventilated, to be incinerated as soon as possible (p. 284).

Pressac maintains that the crematoria were later modified for criminal purposes. As has already been indicated, the basement morgues were converted, one into a dressing room (*Leichenkeller* 2) and another into a homicidal gas chamber (*Leichenkeller* 1). *Leichenkeller* 3 disappeared. So, according to the French author's thesis, the crematoria needed mortuaries for storing corpses until cremation only when they had to be concerned about natural deaths in the camp; and on the other hand, they didn't need them when they had to contend with the much greater number of corpses "produced" by the gas chamber. In other words, following Pressac, cremation was a slow process when it involved prisoners who died of natural causes, since space was lacking to store the corpses prior to cremation; and yet it was a super-fast process in the case of extermination, because then, despite a much larger number of corpses, there was no need to store them. Let us now take a look at the extermination process that was supposedly carried out in these crematoria.

The first thing that gives surprise is the scant space Pressac allots to this matter, since, according to the title of his work ("Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers"), it ought to have received a much more extensive treatment. Of the 196 pages which Pressac devotes to the study of Crematoria I and II, there is less than half a page of text ("The use of the

Krematorien for the 'resettlement' of Jews unfit for work," p. 253) and a page of drawings (p. 258) focussing specifically on the method of extermination.

Pressac indicates that the extermination proceeded in groups of 1,000 to 1,500 people at a time (p. 253). However, all the testimonies reproduced by the author cite much higher figures: 3,000 according to R. Höss[15] and M. Nyiszli (p. 473), 2,500 according to H. Tauber (p. 494) and 2,000 according to C. S. Bendel (pp. 469 and 471). Pressac does not tell us on what sources he bases his own figures, so that they must be considered mere suppositions. And since he is making suppositions, why pick a figure of 1,000 to 1,500? Why couldn't it be 500? Or 100? Or any other number?

According to the French author, the route followed by the victims within the crematorium was as follows: first they entered the dressing room, where they disrobed. Then they passed through a little vestibule and entered the gas chamber. Once the 1,000 or 1,500 persons were within the 210 square meters of the gas chamber, then came the introduction of the lethal agent, *Zyklon B* (an insecticide composed of hydrocyanic acid) through four holes in the roof. The amount of *Zyklon B* introduced was 40 times the lethal dose per person. In five minutes at most, the victims were dead (p. 253). Immediately thereafter the ventilation began:

> The air extraction system was then switched on for at least 20 to 30 minutes, for there was a great deal of poisoned air still in the chamber, the amount absorbed by the victims being minimal. The gas-tight door was then unbolted and opened, and the work of extracting the corpses began immediately (p. 253).

Elsewhere Pressac states that after "15 minutes of ventilation the air in the room would be completely renewed" (p. 16).

It is my opinion that, on the contrary, not only would the supposed gas chamber be full of hydrocyanic acid even after 20 or 30 minutes of ventilation, but that even the structure itself presented such difficulties for carrying out mass homicidal gassings on a habitual basis, that the actual practice of such an operation would certainly have ended disastrously, for the following reasons:

—The ventilation system of the supposed gas chamber was in reality appropriate for a mortuary that needed to be aired out

in order to eliminate the bad odor produced by the decomposition of the corpses. But as Pressac acknowledges, the system was not the most appropriate for ventilating a gas chamber:

> The ventilation system of Leichenkeller 1 had initially been *designed for a morgue*, with the fresh air entering near the ceiling and the cold unhealthy air being drawn out near the floor. Its use as a gas chamber really required the reverse situation, with the fresh air coming in near the floor and warm air saturated with hydrocyanic acid being drawn out near the ceiling (p. 224, emphasis in the original).

This system presented yet another difficulty. The poison gas had to exit through holes, located just above the floor, which led to a "ventilation conduit" (*Entlüftungskanal*). These holes were small according to the testimony of H. Tauber, former member of the *Sonderkommando* (p. 484). Given the crowding that existed in the gas chamber, with from 1,000 to 1,500 people in 210 square meters of space, the welter of corpses brought about by the gassing might easily have obstructed these little holes, so that the ventilation would have become difficult or impossible.

These two problems could easily have been avoided had the Germans merely reversed the intake and exhaust airflow when they converted the morgue into a gas chamber.

—*Leichenkeller* 1 and 2 were each equipped with a ventilation system powered by electric motors. *Leichenkeller* 2—the "dressing room"—with a volume of 902.7 cubic meters, was equipped with a 7.5 horsepower motor; *Leichenkeller* 1—the alleged gas chamber—with a volume of 506 cubic meters, had a 3.5 horsepower motor (pp. 286, 360 and 361). From this it follows that the dressing room had a ventilation system that was, actually as well as proportionately, faster and more powerful than that of the gas chamber. This situation would have been normal for morgues (or mortuaries), from which the odor of the decomposing bodies has to be removed. *Leichenkeller* 2, the larger of the two mortuaries, would have been equipped with a larger motor. What is not logical is that the Germans should have installed a faster and more powerful ventilation system in the dressing room, where it wouldn't have been strictly necessary, rather than in the gas chamber, where it would have been essential to eliminate rapidly—in 20 or 30 minutes—all traces of hydrocyanic acid in order to enable the removal of the bodies. Comparing the power of the

two motors thus gives a strong indication that the Germans did not convert *Leichenkeller* 1 into a gas chamber.

—Ventilation of the gas chamber within 15, 20, or 30 minutes is highly improbable. Pressac cites the testimony of a former prisoner of Auschwitz, A. Rablin, who participated in delousing with *Zyklon B*. This was done in an improvised gas chamber located in Block 3 of Auschwitz. The delousing chamber was approximately 300 cubic meters in volume and was equipped with an exhaust fan and seven windows for ventilation. The concentration of hydrocyanic acid used in the delousing process was from 0.05 to 0.1 per cent. Under these conditions the ventilation lasted *two hours* (p. 25).

Let us compare these circumstances with those of the supposed homicidal gas chamber of Crematoria II and III. In this case the area was larger, some 506 cubic meters, and the ventilation system, as we have seen, functioned in a way that was the opposite of what would have been desirable. The vents for exhausting the toxic agent were next to the floor, so that they could be partially or totally obstructed by the hodgepodge of corpses. There were no windows in the place. The concentration of hydrocyanic acid employed was 1 per cent (p.18), ten to twenty times stronger than that used in the delousing process.

The above comparison thus gives rise to another anomaly: the delousing chamber, of smaller volume, with an exhaust fan and seven windows, and contending with a far weaker concentration of hydrocyanic acid, presumably required *more time* to be ventilated than the supposed homicidal gas chamber, which was larger, which had an inadequate ventilation system, which lacked windows and which used a far higher concentration of hydrocyanic acid.

—The nature of the presumed toxic agent, *Zyklon B*, would have involved a grave problem when the time came to remove the corpses.

Zyklon B consists of pure hydrocyanic acid in liquid form, chemically stabilized and absorbed into a porous and inert base, generally in the form of disks or small cubes of wood pulp.[16]

The hydrocyanic acid evaporates from the porous base, its rate of evaporation varying under different conditions of temperature and humidity. The process is a relatively slow one. Exposure times for *Zyklon B* vary greatly. Its

manufacturers have established a *minimum of two hours* and a maximum of 72.[17] Because of the possibility that the inert base containing the *Zyklon* may go on emitting hydrocyanic acid even after many hours of exposure, the manufacturers insist that the tins (*Zyklon* is marketed in tins) and all traces of base must be removed before the treated area can be reoccupied.[18]

Therefore, on opening the door of the gas chamber to remove the dead bodies, an operation that was carried out approximately 20 minutes (p. 16) or 30 minutes (p. 253) after the introduction of the *Zyklon B*, the base would go on emanating hydrocyanic acid, thereby contaminating the rest of the building. And if the Germans had wished to avoid this situation by removing the disks or little cubes of wood immediately after opening the door, they would have faced two more problems. In the first place, the jumble of corpses, from 5 to 7 bodies per square meter according to Pressac's estimate, would make access to the scattered residues very difficult. And in the second place, the porous base of the *Zyklon B*, which was supposedly thrown into the interior of four columns of wire mesh, could not be removed after the gassing anyway. Pressac's own reconstruction of one of these mesh columns includes no opening through which to extract the base (p. 487).

—After removal of the corpses from the gas chamber, the next procedure was hauling them to the crematory room for incineration. Given that *Leichenkeller* 1 was below ground and the ovens were at ground level, a freight elevator had been installed. According to Pressac, at first a provisional elevator with a capacity of three or four corpses was used. Later the workers used a permanent elevator, capable of lifting 10 or 15 bodies at a time (p. 253). From that we may infer that in order to take 1,000 or 1,500 corpses up to the ovens with the provisional freight elevator, 67 to 100 trips would be required. If we consider hypothetically that the process of loading, ascending, and unloading the corpses and taking the freight elevator back down took five minutes, it would have required a half day's incessant labor to get all the corpses to the ovens. In any case, it is evident that the work of hoisting so many bodies in such a small freight elevator would have been most cumbersome, and that the Germans could easily have avoided such a nuisance by building the gas chamber at ground level. Besides, building a gas chamber below ground was harder work and more expense. The excavation and construction

took place in marshy ground, requiring that the floor, ceiling and walls all be waterproofed with a material which was both scarce and costly during the war.

Thus we are confronted by a train of evidence that gives very strong support to the hypothesis that the Germans not only designed *Leichenkeller* 1 as a mortuary, but also constructed it and used it as for just that purpose.

Conclusions:

—The results that follow from Pressac's thesis are neither logical nor credible. According to the French author, the Germans designed Crematoria II and III with no criminal intent, even though they were later converted to carry out mass extermination. This criminal transformation was indeed peculiar, in that no modification was made in the ventilation system of the mortuary, although it was anything but adequate for a gas chamber. In spite of this, and notwithstanding that the Germans had conceived other installations expressly for extermination purposes, Crematoria II and III were used to annihilate and incinerate 750,000 Jews, three quarters of the alleged victims of Auschwitz.

—Several indications reinforce our hypothesis that not only was *Leichenkeller* 1 conceived as a mortuary—which even Pressac admits—but that it was also constructed as such, and in a form that would have made its utilization as a homicidal gas chamber difficult, if not impossible.

The procedure for the ongoing mass extermination of human beings in Crematoria II and III, as described by Pressac, would have been impracticable.

Crematoria IV and V of Birkenau

Crematoria IV and V were twins. According to Pressac, three or four homicidal gas chambers functioned in each of them. Crematorium IV went into service in March of 1943 and operated until October of 1944, when it was set on fire during a prisoner revolt. Crematorium V was in operation from April of 1943 to January of 1945 (p. 379).

Unlike Crematoria II and II, Crematoria IV and V "were designed as criminal instruments," although "modifications introduced in the course of their construction and operation made their operating sequence absurd" (p.447). This is an astonishing revelation. Accepting it would result in the

following paradox: Crematoria II and III were designed with no criminal aim, although modifications introduced during the course of their construction made them both into such efficient human slaughterhouses that they annihilated three quarters of the victims of Auschwitz. On the other hand, Crematoria IV and V *were* designed as criminal instruments, although the modifications introduced during the course of their construction transformed their sequence of operations into an absurdity. In other words, the architects and technicians of Auschwitz were simultaneously very stupid and very clever. Very clever when they transformed ordinary crematoria into prodigious instruments of mass extermination, and very stupid when they made alterations in facilities expressly for mass slaughter, rendering them unusable.

Moreover, if—as Pressac points out—the procedure followed in these crematoriums was "irrational and ridiculous," and if the "natural ventilation was badly oriented and dangerous," and if the introduction of the poison "resembled a circus act" (p. 386), then it is not difficult to imagine that the extermination process would have been, of necessity, a disaster.

The annihilation was carried out in groups of 2,400 people at a time (p. 384). Pressac does not explain why in these crematoria, with gas chambers 240 square meters in area and a crematory oven with eight muffle furnaces, the operation proceeded in groups of 2,400 people, whereas in Crematoria II and III, with gas chambers of similar dimensions (210 square meters) and practically twice the cremation capacity (15 muffle furnaces), it was carried out in groups of 1,000 to 1,500 victims.

According to Pressac, the extermination process followed this sequence: the Jews entered into a large hall and disrobed; once undressed, the 2,400 victims were directed to the three gas chambers, into which they were packed until there were 10 persons to each square meter.

According to the testimony of a survivor, Dr. Bendel, the process was somewhat different. The victims disrobed outside the crematorium and entered the large hall (for what purpose?). Later they turned and went back the way they had come and were directed to the gas chambers. The 2,400 victims traversed the narrow passageway between the large

hall and the gas chambers amidst an "indescribable chaos," since they had a premonition of "the death that awaited them" (p. 470).

Once the victims were in the gas chambers and the doors locked, the SS men flung in *Zyklon B* through windows that were reached with a stepladder. The SS on duty would open the window with one hand and throw in the contents of the tin with the other, which, in Pressac's words, constituted a "circus act." This operation had to be repeated six times for each gas chamber, since each one had six windows (p. 386). Notwithstanding that the installations were conceived for criminal purposes, no such devices as the wire-mesh columns of Crematoria II and III had been provided.

About 30 minutes after the *Zyklon B* was dropped in, the doors were opened, Pressac says, for ventilation (p. 384). Inexplicably, these gas chambers had only natural ventilation (p. 16), which means that they ought to have been aired out for a period of at least 10 hours.[19] Nevertheless, the removal of the corpses followed *immediately*, since, according to Dr. Bendel's testimony, they were still warm (p. 470).

Under these conditions, however, a catastrophe would have taken place. 30 minutes after the *Zyklon B* had been thrown in, there would still have been a high concentration of hydrocyanic acid in the gas chambers. On an average, the amount of *Zyklon B* that the Germans employed was 40 times the fatal human dosage (p. 18). Accordingly, when the *Sonderkommando* opened the door to remove the dead bodies, dispersion of the hydrocyanic acid and contamination of the entire building would have occurred inevitably. In short, under the stated conditions the extermination process in Crematoria IV and V would have been impossible.

Furthermore, Pressac points out that the delousing chambers of Auschwitz and Birkenau, which also functioned with *Zyklon B*, had at least one fan for ventilation (pp. 24, 25, 27, 31, 41 and 53), making it even more incomprehensible that the SS failed to equip the gas chambers of Crematoria IV and V with the same.

As if it didn't matter, although natural ventilation was all that was available, in their construction the Germans had taken no account of the prevailing winds, so that, as Pressac acknowledges, ventilation "was slow and inefficient, with the attendant risk of contaminating the rooms giving onto the

vestibule if there should be a sudden gust of wind from the west" (p. 386).

From all the foregoing, two conclusions may be drawn:

—Pressac's thesis that the SS made so many clumsy mistakes in designing and constructing these crematoriums that the extermination process became absurd and ridiculous lacks credibility. The evidence indicates, on the contrary, that the Germans did not design these installations for a criminal purpose and did not provide them with gas chambers of any kind.

—The habitual mass extermination of human beings in Crematoria IV and V, as Pressac presents it, would have proven completely impracticable.

The Cremation Capacity of the Crematoria

On the momentous question of the cremation of the corpses, Pressac states the following:

> The real throughput of a type II/III Krematorium was from 1,000 to 1,100 corpses per 24 hours and the maximum for a type IV/V was about 500 a day. The total capacity for the four Krematorien was therefore about 3,000 a day (P. 244).

Pressac indicates no source as a basis for his estimate, which is purely hypothetical. To begin with, the figures given by the French author can not be reconciled with those of *all* the testimonies cited in his work. Thus, according to Dr. Bendel, the daily incineration capacity of Crematoria II and III was 2,000 corpses each, with a corresponding figure of 1,000 each for Crematoria IV and V (p. 469); for Dr. Nyiszli, the total capacity of all the crematoria together was 20,000 corpses per day (p. 474); for H. Tauber, the capacity of Crematorium II was 2,500 per day (p. 494); according to the War Refugee Board report (a secret report on Auschwitz drafted in 1944), the four crematoria were able to consume 6,000 bodies a day (p. 461); according to a report ascribed to SS officer Franke-Gricksch, who visited Auschwitz in 1943, the total capacity was 10,000 corpses a day (p. 238).

Pressac's estimate does not square with the data given in a document of the "Headquarters Construction Office" (*Zentralbauleitung*) of the Auschwitz SS, which establishes the capacity of the crematoria as follows:

Crematoria II and III: 1,440 corpses each in 24 hours

Crematoria IV and V: 768 corpses each in 24 hours (p.247).

Pressac's estimate is likewise irreconcilable with the "revision" which he himself makes in the document cited. According to the author, the figure in this document "had no basis in practice, and probably has to be divided by two or three to arrive at the true figure" (p. 244). This means that a crematorium of type II-III would have had an incineration capacity of 480 to 720 corpses in 24 hours and one of type IV-V a capacity of 256 to 384.

One conclusion which can be drawn from the above is that the cremation figures reflected in the testimonies, as well as those in the *Zentralbauleitung* document, strike Pressac as greatly exaggerated. He has thus estimated a hypothetical cremation capacity which, as we shall see, bears no relationship to the capacity which can be inferred from evidence he himself publishes in his work.

From documents published by Pressac, we derive an incineration capacity that is greatly reduced and assuredly much closer to the true figure. Thus, a German document which provides operating instructions for the crematory ovens indicates that the corpses had to be inserted in the individual cremation chambers or muffles "one after another" (*hintereinander*) (p. 136). This detail is in explicit contradiction to those testimonies which affirm that several corpses were put into a muffle furnace at the same time, with the number varying between three and twelve.

Another German document, which tabulates the consumption of coke by the crematory ovens, starts from the assumption that they operate twelve hours per day (p. 224), in disagreement with various testimonies stating that they functioned continuously, without interruption.

Pressac also reproduces a patent, registered in 1953, of an oven made by the Topf company—the same one that made the ovens of Auschwitz—which incorporated "much of the experience gained by Topf in the concentration camps" (p. 105). The estimated time for incinerating a body in this oven was from 30 to 45 minutes (p.105).[20]

If we assume, then, that the Birkenau ovens were as fast as that of the 1953 patent, that the corpses were incinerated one

after another and not several at a time, and that the ovens operated twelve hours a day, we get the following result:

–Crematoria II and III (with 15 muffles each) could have incinerated from 128 to 360 corpses a day.

–Crematoria IV and V (with 8 muffles each) could have incinerated from 128 to 192 corpses a day.

–In total, the Birkenau crematoria could have incinerated 736 to 1,104 corpses per day.

Therefore, by using of the information which Pressac himself has provided, we arrive at an estimate of the capacity of the Birkenau crematoria which is three or four times inferior to that indicated by the French author.

Pressac also publishes data on the capacity of certain crematory ovens constructed by the Topf company and installed in other concentration camps. Thus, in the Buchenwald crematory, an average of six or seven corpses per muffle were incinerated each day (p. 106). At Gusen (a subsidiary camp of Mauthausen), according to prisoner notes, 600 corpses were incinerated in twelve days, which means an average of 25 corpses per muffle furnace per day (p. 110).

Pressac acknowledges that these ovens and those of Birkenau "must have had roughly the same performance," since they "were virtually identical as regards design and construction" (p. 110). In consequence, if we apply the Buchenwald and Gusen references to the four crematoria of Birkenau, which had a total of 46 muffle furnaces, we arrive at a capacity of 322 corpses per day according to the Buchenwald ratio and of 1,150 according to that of Gusen. Figures, therefore, that are also much lower than those given by Pressac.

It is necessary to bear in mind that the incineration capacity was further limited due to breakdowns. Crematorium II was out of service for two or three months in the second half of 1943 for various repairs. Crematorium IV was soon closed for good, and Crematorium V operated only intermittently (p. 247).

Moreover, there are indications that at least during certain periods of time the Birkenau crematoria operated at low capacity. For example, Pressac states that, according to German documents, the coke consumption of the crematoria from April to October of 1943 was only a third or fourth of

what one would expect if they had been operating at full capacity twelve hours per day (pp. 224-227).

In short, the cremation capacity given by Pressac:

> —is reconcilable neither with the testimonies of former prisoners nor with the information contained in available German documents;
>
> —is arbitrary, inasmuch as he cites no reference in its support;
>
> —and, finally, is highly exaggerated, since all the evidence points strongly in the direction of a substantially lower cremation capacity.

The "Indirect" Proofs

At the end of his investigation, Pressac is forced to acknowledge the lack of proof of the existence of homicidal gas chambers in the Birkenau crematoria. Nevertheless, he says, that in:

> the absence of any "direct," i.e. palpable, indisputable and evident proof (lacking so far as we know at present) such as a photograph of people killed by a toxic gas in an enclosed space that can be perfectly located and identified, or of a label on a Krematorium drawing of a "Gaskammer um Juden zu vergiften/gas chamber for poisoning Jews," an "indirect" proof may suffice and be valid (p. 429).

And so, after having done research for some years in the principal archives—to which generously access was given him—and after having examined hundreds of documents, photographs and plans, Pressac admits to not having encountered a single "palpable, indisputable and evident" proof—that is to say, a real proof—of the existence of homicidal gas chambers in the crematoria of Birkenau. In other words, Pressac—and with him, all the Exterminationist authors—has been unable up to now, 44 years after the war, to find one single proof of the criminal character of installations which supposedly brought about the destruction of hundreds of thousands of people during a 21-month period of operation (the greatest crime in history); installations whose design and construction gave rise to an enormous amount of documentation. This is a fact of great significance.

Nevertheless, Pressac reckons that in the absence of real proof, an "indirect" proof may suffice. His argument is invalid,

for with "indirect proofs" it would be possible to prove the existence of almost anything. Let us imagine, for example, the case of someone who intended to demonstrate that centaurs really existed in antiquity. Naturally it would not be possible for him to present any real proof, such as a skeleton or fossil remains, but he would still be able to argue that the artistic representations of centaurs found in archaeological excavations in Greece, Cyprus and Italy constituted an "indirect" proof of their existence.

Let us examine Pressac's "indirect" proofs of the homicidal gas chambers:

> In the final analysis, there remain only the various items of correspondence and official documents of German origin. Through the "slips" that can be found in them, they form a convincing body of presumptive evidence and clearly indicate the presence in the four Birkenau Krematorien (II, III, IV and V) of gas chambers using a prussic acid disinfestation agent sold under the name of "Zyclon-B" (p. 429, emphasis in the original).

Or rather, in the final analysis, the "indirect proofs" would seem to be—according to Pressac—lapses committed by the civilian workers who built the crematoria (a dozen civil firms participated in their construction) and by SS personnel when they drafted their notes and documents. In other words, both the civilian workers and technicians and the SS knew the real, homicidal purpose of the crematoria, but had reached a tacit agreement to omit all "criminal" references in their correspondence and documents in order to keep up appearances (for whom?). The Germans from time to time, however, committed indiscretions, mentioning in their letters and on their worksheets such things as "gas-tight doors," "gas detectors" and "basement disrobing rooms." Still, the Germans were prudent even in their lapses, for although though they could use the term "Auskleidekeller" for the place where the victims supposedly disrobed, on the other hand they did not have "the courage, or perhaps the desire or the occasion to write that Leichenkeller 1 was a gas chamber" (p.434).

Let's turn now to enumerating the different expressions found in the German documents and which, according to Pressac, constitute "indirect" proofs or, as he also likes to call them, "criminal traces" of the existence of homicidal gas chambers.

a) In Crematoria II and III.

—"Vergasungskeller/gassing cellar" ("trace" No. 1, p. 432). The German word "Vergasung" has several meanings, such as "gasification" or "carburetion." I do not know which of these would be applicable in this context. Neither do I know the exact location of the place. Contrary to what Pressac believes, there is no document that expressly establishes that the *Vergasungskeller* is *Leichenkeller* 1.

—"10 Gasprüfer/gas detectors" ("trace" No. 2, p. 432). Pressac himself allows a non-sinister interpretation: they could have served to detect gases produced by the combustion in the ovens, such as carbon monoxide or carbon dioxide (p. 371).

—"Auskleideraum/undressing room" and "Auskleidekeller/undressing cellar" ("traces" Nos. 4, 5, 10 and 12; pp. 432, 434 and 438). Why do these terms necessarily have to be given a criminal interpretation? They could refer to the place in which clothes were removed from the corpses.

—"Gastür 100/192 für Leichenkeller 1/gas door 100 by 192 for underground morgue 1" ("traces" No. 6 and 11, pp. 434 and 438). The document is dated 6 March 1943. However, in a plan of the crematorium of a later date, No. 2197 of 19 March of the same year (p. 311), the door of *Leichenkeller* 1 has the dimensions of 1.90 x 1.90 meters. How is this discrepancy to be explained?

—"4 Drahtnetzeinschiebvorrichtung/4 wire mesh introduction devices" and "4 Holzblenden/4 wooden covers" ("traces" Nos. 8 and 9, p. 436). Supposedly they served for the introduction of the *Zyklon B*, although according to the German document they were to be found in *Leichenkeller* 2 and not in the gas chamber, as one would expect. This was an "error" according to Pressac.

—"Criminal traces" connected with "gastight doors" (*Gasdichtetüre*) and accessories for the latter (Nos. 3, 7, 13, 14 and 15; pp. 432, 436, 438 and 439). Pressac thinks that a gastight door necessarily has a criminal connotation. However, these doors could have been installed, for example, to prevent the stench coming from the decomposing corpses from going clear through the whole crematorium. Pressac himself makes mention of the existence of hermetic doors in a crematorium without sinister implications. These doors were

in Crematoria IV and V, in an area was intended to isolate the crematory room from the mortuary.[21]

—"14 Brausen/14 showers" ("trace" No. 16, p. 439). As ordinary showers, their presence would not have a criminal character, so Pressac claims that they were dummy showers, installed for the purpose of fooling the victims, who believed that they were entering into the gas chamber to take a shower. The French author considers that the presence of these showers *together with* a gastight door is the definitive proof of the existence of a homicidal gas chamber. However, Pressac does not prove that the showers were actually sham. Besides, the installation of showers could have been counterproductive in effect, inasmuch as the victims might have asked themselves what was the need of a gastight door in a room in which they were simply going to take a shower.

—One German document speaks of *Leichenkeller* 1 as having to be "preheated" (*vorgewärmt*) and of an installation for that purpose ("traces" Nos. 30 and 31, p. 454). Pressac affirms, with reason, that the preheating of the *Leichenkeller* can not be reconciled with the existence of a "cold room" created to retard the decomposition of the corpses. The preheating, according to Pressac, would have been for the purpose of speeding up the evaporation of hydrocyanic acid.

At present I am unable to give an explanation of these "traces," but I do wish to point out that the document in question refers to a letter from Prüfer, the engineer who designed the ovens, in which he suggested preheating the room. This letter has disappeared. It is curious that a civilian, a cremation expert, should have given the SS a suggestion on how to make a gassing more effective. In any case, Pressac must know that this system of preheating was never put into practice (p. 227).

b) In Crematoria IV and V.

—"betonieren im Gasskammer [*sic*]/concrete in gas chamber" ("traces" Nos. 19 and 21, pp. 446 and 447).

The document is a civilian employee's work slip and is dated 2 March 1943. The following day the same worker notes: "level and flatten in both rooms" (*planieren und stampfen in beiden Kammern*), and on 4 March: "concrete and finish the floor in both rooms and anteroom" (*Fussboden betonieren und reiben in beiden Kammern u. Vorraum*).[22] According to

Pressac, the worker was referring by these "Kammern" to the rooms at the extreme west of Crematorium IV, that is, to the gas chambers. From that we deduce that either the "Gasskammer" was not in either of those two rooms or that it was concreted twice. Moreover, a later document suggests that in the two rooms where the gas chambers were supposedly to be found, there were "installations for water" (*Wasserinstallations*).[23]

—The rest of the "criminal traces" (Nos. 17, 18, 20 and 22 to 29; pp. 443-454) are references to gastight doors and windows and accessories for them. In this regard, see my prior comments on the gastight doors.

c) Other "traces."

—"Beschläge für gasdichte Tür/fitting for gas-tight door" ("trace" No. 32, p. 456).

Use unknown. See comments on gastight doors.

—"1 Schlüssel für Gaskammer/1 key for gas chamber" ("trace" No. 33, p. 456).

According to Pressac, this is a dubious type of "trace." The ordering of this item, the author says, is "incomprehensible with our present state of knowledge."

—"Die Beschläge zu 1 Tür mit Rahmen, luftdicht mit Spion für Gaskammer/The fittings for 1 door with frame, air-tight with peephole for gas chamber" ("trace" No. 34, p. 456).

According to Pressac, this order has nothing to do with the Birkenau crematoria, but was intended for one of the delousing chambers.

It is important to emphasize that Pressac has presented the documents he cites out of context. In my opinion, in order satisfactorily to explain the commonplace character of these "criminal traces," meticulous study of *all* the documents relating to the construction of the crematoria is essential. It is very possible that with a wider perspective we should then obtain an answer to the questions raised by these "traces." An isolated knife can be a criminal weapon, but a knife together with a spoon and fork is simply a place setting.

Pressac concludes this fundamental part of his work as follows:

> Summarizing, a study of the files concerning the construction of the four Birkenau Krematorien reveals 39

> (THIRTY NINE) "slips" or "criminal traces" of different sorts, the majority of which constitute material proof of the intention to make certain rooms IN THE FOUR KREMATORIEN "Gasdichte" or gas-tight. The incompatibility between a gas-tight door and 14 shower heads indirectly proves the use of one of these rooms as a HOMICIDAL GAS CHAMBER (p. 456, capitals in the original).

As Pressac acknowledges, the majority of the "criminal traces" only demonstrate the Germans' intention to make certain parts of the crematoria airtight. This fact, by itself, proves nothing. Nor do the rest of the "traces," by themselves, prove the criminal character of the crematoria. It is only the combination of two or more of these "traces" that lets Pressac say that they "indirectly" prove the utilization of homicidal gas chambers.

The fact is that after his monumental investigation into these crematoria, which supposedly exterminated around a million persons over a period of nearly two years, crematoria the design and construction of which left behind hundreds of plans, notes, records of meetings, contracts, work orders, bills and photographs—in short, an immense documentation—Pressac can present *not a single proof* of their criminal nature. In the last analysis, the French author can only allege a presumed incompatibility between a gastight door and 14 supposedly fake showerheads that, according to him, would prove—even though only "indirectly"—the existence of gas chambers.

In sum, Pressac's work not only fails to refute the Revisionist thesis, as he intended, but on the contrary makes clear how very justified are the criticism and skepticism of the Revisionists with regard to the supposed homicidal gas chambers of Auschwitz.

Notes

1. Höss, Rudolf: *Yo, comandante de Auschwitz* (Autobiografía) (I, Commandant of Auschwitz [Autobiography]) (Muchnik, Barcelona, 1979, p. 148.
2. Rudolf Höss, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-148.
3. Höss, *op. cit.*, p. 193.
4. Höss, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
5. Höss, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

6. Fred A. Leuchter, *An Engineering Report on the Alleged Execution Gas Chambers at Auschwitz, Birkenau and Majdanek—Poland* (Boston: Fred A. Leuchter Associates, 1988). Unpublished in the complete version, which is the one cited.
7. Fred A. Leuchter, *op. cit.*, p. 35 (my own numbering).
8. Höss, *op. cit.*, p. 194.
9. Höss, *op. cit.*, p. 191.
10. Czech, Danuta: *Kalendarium der Ereignisse im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau* (Rowohlt, Reinbek 1989), pp. 106f.
11. Höss: *op. cit.*p. 191.
12. Höss: *op. cit.*, p. 192.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Höss: *op. cit.*, p. 191.
15. Höss: *op. cit.*, p. 200.
16. Degesch: *Zyklon for Pest Control* (Frankfurt am Main), p. 11.
17. Degesch: *op. cit.*, p. 17.
18. "It is imperative that not a single tin be left about!" (Degesch: *op. cit.*, p. 21).
19. Degesch: *op. cit.*, p. 21.
20. I accept this with reservations. During the '60s, cremation of a cadaver took 50 to 80 minutes (*Gran Enciclopedia del Mundo*, Durvan, Bilbao 1966, article "Incineration," vol. 10, p. 852).
21. Pressac, Jean-Claude: Les 'Krematorien' IV et V de Birkenau et leurs chambres à gaz. Construction et fonctionnement, "*Le Monde Juif*" (Paris), No. 107 (1982), pp. 119-120.
22. Pressac: *loc. cit.*, p. 111.
23. Pressac: *loc. cit.*, p. 118.

An Official Polish Report on the Auschwitz "Gas Chambers"

Krakow Forensic Institute Bolsters Leuchter's Findings

A recent investigation by a Polish government agency has authoritatively corroborated the findings of Fred Leuchter from his detailed 1988 on-site forensic examination of supposed German wartime extermination gas chambers. The American execution expert concluded that the "gas chambers" in the former concentration camps of Auschwitz, Birkenau and Majdanek were never used to kill people. (On Leuchter's findings and the resulting international controversy, see his detailed *Report*, which is available from the IHR, as well as *The Journal of Historical Review*, Summer 1989 and Winter 1990-91, and the *IHR Newsletter*, October 1990 and January 1991.)

Concerned at the impact of Leuchter's widely-circulated *Report*, the Auschwitz State Museum, a Polish government agency, commissioned the Institute of Forensic Research Instytut Ekspertyz Sadowych) of Krakow to carry out its own investigation. The result: In a carefully worded six-page internal forensic report, the Institute's experts essentially replicated Leuchter's findings and implicitly corroborated his conclusions.

Consistent with Leuchter's investigation, the Institute's specialists detected absolutely no traces of cyanide (or ferro-ferric-cyanide compound) in most of the plaster and brick samples taken from the alleged extermination gas chambers. Traces of cyanides were detected in eight samples, seven of which were rooms in Block 3 of Auschwitz main camp where—as the Institute's experts acknowledge—inmate

clothing was disinfected by "gassing" with Zyklon.

A barely detectable trace of cyanide compound was found in the eighth remaining "positive" sample, which was sample No. 15 from the alleged homicidal "gas chamber" in Krema building II in Birkenau. Significantly, this is the only sample taken from any of the supposed extermination gas chambers that showed any trace of cyanide. The presence of an almost indetectable trace in this sample is entirely in keeping with Leuchter's conclusion that the room from which it was taken must have been deloused with Zyklon at one time or another.

In an apparent attempt at "damage control," the authors of the Institute's report sought to play down or negate the significance of their own findings by asserting that any cyanide traces would have disappeared long ago under the impact of the weather and the elements. This assertion is simply not true, as Leuchter and other specialists have pointed out:

- Precisely speaking, it is not hydrogen cyanide itself that leaves a trace, but rather the compounds that result from the interaction of hydrogen cyanide with iron and other heavy metal ions. The resulting ferro-ferric-cyanide compounds are very stable as James Roth, chief chemist of Alpha Analytical Labs in Massachusetts, testified in the 1988 "Holocaust" trial of Ernst Zündel. Even after 45 years, the compounds would not have "weathered away."

- It is not true that all of the alleged gas chambers were exposed to the elements, as the Institute's experts contend. Specifically, the entire crematory facility (Krema) I in the Auschwitz main camp, including the alleged homicidal "gas chamber" there, has been completely intact since the camp was liberated by Soviet forces in January 1945. The authors of the Krakow Institute report make no effort to explain the absence of cyanide traces in this "gas chamber." Similarly, the alleged extermination gas chamber of crematory facility (Krema) II in Birkenau is protected by the collapsed concrete ceiling, and is otherwise in its original condition.

It is worth noting that the Krakow Institute's report did not respond at all to other compelling reasons given by Leuchter for doubting the orthodox extermination story. As he points out, for example, the alleged homicidal gas chambers he examined were not properly sealed or vented for use as killing facilities.

Auschwitz State Museum officials initiated this investigation rather obviously hoping that the Institute's report would discredit Leuchter's findings and corroborate the orthodox extermination account. And just as obviously, if the Institute's report had, in fact, discredited the American engineer's conclusions, the Auschwitz State Museum and Holocaust organizations around the world would certainly have wasted no time in giving it maximum publicity.

Although neither the Auschwitz State Museum nor the Krakow Institute has (so far) made this September 1990 report public, Revisionists were nevertheless able to obtain a copy of the original document. Professor Robert Faurisson in France and Fred Leuchter in the United States were quick to cite this "Polish Leuchter Report" as corroboration of the Revisionist view of the Auschwitz extermination story. (See the *IHR Newsletter*, April 1991.)

Published here for the first time in English, a translation of the Krakow Institute's report follows:

INSTITUTE OF FORENSIC RESEARCH
In the name of Prof. Dr. Jan Sehn, Krakow
Division of Forensic Toxicology

Krakow, 24 Sept. 1990
Westerplatte 9 / Code 31-033
Tel. 505-44, 592-24, 287-50
Telex 0325213 eksad

Ref. No. 720 / 90

[rubber stamp:]
Received at the Auschwitz State Museum,
11 Oct. 1990 / filed: I 4998

To the
State Museum in
Auschwitz-Birkenau

Re: Ref. No. I-8523/51/1860/89

The Institute of Forensic Research,
in the name of Prof. Dr. Jan Sehn, Krakow,
herewith presents this

Forensic Report,

prepared by the court-approved experts

INSTYTUT EKSPERTYZ SĄDOWYCH
im. Prof. dr Jana Sehna
w Krakowie
ZAKŁAD CHEMICZNO-TOKSYKOLOGICZNY
TOKSYKOLOGII SĄDOWEJ

Kraków, dnia 24 września 1990 r.
Westerplatte 9 kod 31-033
505-44, 592-24, 287-50
Telex 0325213 eksad

Dz. E. 720 / 90

Państwowe Muzeum Oświęcim - Brzezinka

Wpłynęło dnia 11.X.90 r.

Dotyczy: L.dz.I-8523/51/1860/89

Instytut Ekspertyz Sądowych im.Prof.dr Jana Sehna w Krakowie przedkłada

o p i n i ę

opracowaną przez biegłych - Prof.dr Jana Markiewicza, dr. Wojciecha Gubałę, inż.Jerzego Łabędzia, mgr Beatę Trzcińską.

W związku z prezentowanymi w publikacjach oraz w trakcie przewodów sądowych na Zachodzie opiniami, iż w obozie koncetracyjnym w Oświęcimiu gaz Cyklon B nie był stosowany do uśmiercania ludzi - Muzeum w Oświęcimiu zwróciło się z prośbą o dokonanie analizy próbek tynku ze ścian komór gazowych na obecność cyjanowodoru.

W oparciu o korespondecyjne i telefoniczne uzgodnienia zespół pracowników Instytutu Ekspertyz Sądowych w osobach dr. Wojciech Gubała oraz inż.J.Łabędź udał się w dniu 20.II.1990r. do obozu - Muzeum w Oświęcimiu Brzezince - celem pobrania materiałów do badań dla ustalenia w nich ewentualnej obecności związków kwasu cyjanowdorowego. Materiały, głównie w postaci tynku oraz fragmentów cegły z pomieszczeń Bloku 3 i Krematorium 1 w Oświęcimiu, a także Krematoriów 2,3 i 5 w Brzezince pobrano protokolarnie w obecności dra Franciszka Pipera - st.kustosza Muzeum, zaś próbki tynku z Bloku 11 w Oświęcimiu w obecności mgra Piotra Setkiewicza - pracownika tegoż Muzeum. Łącznie pobrano 22 próbki materiałów, w tym 2 próbki kontrolne, zabezpieczone z miejsc odległych od przypuszczalnego miejsca kontaktu z cyjanowodorem.

First page of the September 1990 report on the forensic investigation of the alleged extermination gas chambers of Auschwitz and Birkenau conducted by a leading Polish forensic institute in response to the *Leuchter Report*.

Prof. Dr. Jan Markiewicz, Dr. Wojciech Gubala, engineer Jerzy Labedz, and Beate Trzcinska, M.S.

In response to publications and court proceedings in the West, according to which Zyklon B gas was not used to kill people in the Auschwitz concentration camp, the Auschwitz [State] Museum asked us to take samples of wall plaster from the gas chambers and analyze them for the presence of hydrogen cyanide.

On the basis of an agreement in writing and by telephone, the team of experts of the Institute of Forensic Research, consisting of Dr. Wojciech Gubala and engineer J. Labedz, arrived on 20 February 1990 at the camp and Museum in Auschwitz-Birkenau for the purpose of taking samples for investigation, in order to determine the presence of hydrocyanic acid compounds.

In accordance with agreed-upon procedure, the material samples, consisting primarily of pieces of wall plaster and brick, were taken in the presence of Dr. Franciszek Piper, senior curator of the Museum, from the rooms of Block 3, from crematory [building] 1 in Auschwitz [main camp], as well as from crematories [buildings] 2, 3 and 5 in Birkenau. Wall plaster samples were also removed from Block 11 in Auschwitz [main camp] in the presence of Piotr Setkiewicz, M.S., an employee of the Museum.

Altogether, 22 samples were removed, including two control samples from a distant place where contamination with HCN [hydrocyanic acid] would not be possible.

Of the 20 samples removed, ten were taken from rooms in Block 3 in Auschwitz [main camp] (from rooms 1, 2, 3 and 4) where inmate clothing was disinfected with Zyklon B. According to our information, these rooms were white-washed during the war years. In some spots, a blue or dark blue stain shows through.

Five samples were also taken from the ruins of the gas chamber of crematory [building] 2 in Birkenau, as well as one sample each from the ruins of crematory [building] 5 and the wall of crematory [building] 1 in Auschwitz [main camp]. No samples were taken from the ruins of crematory [building] 4, because the 30-40 centimeter high wall structure there was reconstructed after the war.

In addition, the above-mentioned employees of the Institute of Forensic Research were given an envelope containing

about 150 grams of human hair (marked PMO II-6-476), which had been obtained by a Museum employee, as well as four pieces of pulverized horse hair material ["wlosianki"] which had likewise been obtained by an employee of the Museum (marked PMO II-6-477 to 480).

Individual samples of the secured material (wall plaster, brick, hair and horse hair material) were reduced to small particles and placed in a micro-diffusion chamber. These samples were then treated with sulfuric acid and exposed to diffusion for 24 hours at room temperature in a Conway chamber. The resulting vapors and gases were absorbed in a sodium-hydroxide solution.

After this diffusion process was completed, the samples were subjected to color intensity analysis using pyridine-pyrazolone reagent, and the resulting color intensity was measured with a spectrophotometer (630 nm).

The corresponding concentration of hydrocyanic acid compound was measured against the calibration curve, which had been calibrated from an appropriately prepared sample of a known concentration.

The Results

Of the ten samples taken from the rooms of Block 3, where Zyklon B disinfection was carried out, traces of hydrocyanic acid compounds were found in seven of the samples in a concentration of nine to 147 micrograms per 100 grams of the sample material, calculated on the basis of the curve calibrated with potassium cyanide.

Concentration of cyanide in the analyzed material:

Sample number, as per the procedure of 20 February 1990	Concentration of cyanide expressed as potassium cyanide (micrograms per 100 grams of material)
Sample No. 1	17
Sample No. 2	9
Sample No. 7	19
Sample No. 8	35
Sample No. 9	101
Sample No. 10	132
Sample No. 11	147
Sample No. 15	6

Note: No cyanide was found in any of the other samples.

Each sample that showed a positive result was then subjected to infrared spectrophotometric analysis in a Digilab company model F TS 15 B spectrophotometer. In five samples analyzed with this technique, the presence of cyanide was detected corresponding to spectral bands with frequencies of 2000 to 2200 cm^{-1}.

In each of the five "positive" tested plaster samples, a more or less distinct blue deposit could be detected. This kind of deposit, which is known as Prussian blue, may result from the interaction of cyanide with iron-based compounds.

Of the samples taken from crematories 1, 2, 3 and 5, only sample number 15 showed almost indetectably small traces of cyanide compounds (6μg per 100 g of wall plaster). This sample was taken from a column that stands in the middle of the gas chamber of crematory [building] 2 in Birkenau.

The analysis of the hair and hair weave produced a negative result. The result of the analysis of the two control samples was also negative.

On 18 July 1990, Dr. W. Gubala returned to the former Auschwitz concentration camp and took seven further samples from the wall plasters where the presence of hydrocyanic compounds had been detected by chemical analysis. These material samples were once again subjected to the analysis procedure described above, and once again the results were positive.

The hydrocyanic acid (HCN) that is released from the Zyklon B preparation is a liquid with a boiling point of about 27 degrees Celsius. It has an acidic character, and therefore forms compounds with metallic salts, which are known as cyanides. The salts of alkaline metals (such as sodium and potassium) are water soluble.

Hydrocyanic acid is a very weak acid, and accordingly its salts dissolve easily in stronger acids. Even carbonic acid, which is formed as a reaction of carbon dioxide with water, will dissolve ferro-cyanide.

Stronger acids, such as sulfuric acids, easily dissolve the cyanides. The compounds of cyanide ions with heavy metals are longer lasting. This includes the already mentioned Prussian blue, although this will also slowly dissolve in an acidic environment.

Therefore, one can hardly assume that traces of cyanic compounds could still be detected in construction materials

(plaster, brick) after 45 years, after being subjected to the weather and the elements (rain, acid oxides, especially sulfuric and nitrogen oxides). More reliable would be the analysis of wall plaster [samples] from closed rooms which were not subject to weather and the elements (including acid rain).

The analysis of the wall plaster taken from the rooms of Block 3 did indicate the presence of hydrocyanic acid compounds, although only in very small amounts. This result is a confirmation of the fact that in these rooms of Block 3, preparations of hydrogen cyanide such as in Zyklon B were used for disinfection.

The discovery of hydrocyanic acid compounds in samples of material which had been subject to the elements can only be accidental.

The macroscopic and microscopic examination of the hair weaves (PMO-II-6-477 to 480) showed hair in the woven material with the properties of human hair, as shown in photos 1, 2, and 3.

[Photos not reproduced here]

The Experts:

Director
Prof. Dr. Jan Markiewicz

Specialist for Technical Testing
Engineer Jerzy Labedz

Director of Toxicology
Dr. Wojciech Gubala

Senior Assistant
Beata Trzcinska, M.S.

[rubber stamp]

Dr. Markiewicz Responds

In late April, IHR Associate Editor Mark Weber wrote to Dr. Jan Markiewicz, director of the Institute of Forensic Research, to ask for a comment on his agency's September 1990 report. He was specifically asked to comment on the significance of

his institute's report in light of Leuchter's 1988 investigation and report. A copy of the April *IHR Newsletter*, which told about the Krakow Institute's investigation and report, was mailed along with Weber's inquiry.

In a letter dated June 7, 1991, Dr. Markiewicz responded:

> I received your letter with enclosure on 16 April 1991. I agree with you that a commentary should necessarily be affixed to our report of 24 Sep. 1990, which is called for by the straightforwardness of information, so essential to any scientific studies. Our Institute of Forensic Research is a scientific-research establishment attached to the Ministry of Justice. Investigations of material evidences are carried out in it independently of the parties to the suit and expert opinions are expressed in civil and criminal cases for the purposes of the administration of justice.
>
> In a letter of 17 May 1989 the then Director of the State Museum at Auschwitz, Mr. Kazimierz Smoleń, asked me to make "an analysis of plaster samples from the walls of the gas chambers for the presence of hydrogen cyanide." In connection with the question posed in that letter I qualified the chances of detecting hydrogen cyanide in such samples as nearly none. As a chemist engaged in forensic chemical toxicology for 45 years, I am familiar with the properties of this volatile substance. Hence my reply. Anyway, I stated that, if only such investigation was considered to be expedient, I was ready to undertake it. As my partner in further talks and possible study I named Dr. Wojciech Gubala of the Forensic Toxicological Laboratory of our Institute. At the same time I referred to the expert appraisal made by Dr. Jan Robel in this Institute in 1945, closely connected with the problems in hand . . .
>
> Having communicated by phone with the Management of the Museum at Auschwitz, Dr. Gubala went there together with his co-worker, Mr. Jerzy Labędź on 10 Feb. 1990. Both these workers were taken round the Camp territory by the curator, Dr. Franciszek Piper, and toward the end of their visit by Mr. Piotr Setkiewicz and they took samples of plaster in places indicated to them, in compliance with the wish expressed by the Director earlier. I was not informed then about the so-called "Leuchter's Report" or about the publications coming out at that time, nor were my co-workers. Their investigations and results are known to you from the expertise the copy of which is in your possession. I'd like to mention that the Management of the Museum did not inform us about the copying of this expert appraisal and its propagation.

> Now, in the light of letters and publications coming to us from different countries, I have arrived at the conclusion that our investigations aiming at the confirmation, if possible, of the use of cyanic preparations in the rooms that survived whole or only in the form of ruins, were rather preliminary in nature and incomplete. We are bent on widening and deepening these investigations and have already been preparing for them. It is only now when suitable materials from literature have become accessible to us that we see the purpose and sense of such studies. Naturally, we shall publish their results and make them accessible to you and your Institute.

The IHR is naturally gratified by Dr. Markiewicz's open-minded and cooperative attitude, which serves the cause of honest scholarship and historical truth.

We are pleased that the Krakow Institute will continue its investigation into this very important aspect of the Auschwitz extermination story, and we appreciate his pledge to make the results available to us.

In response to a couple of issues raised in this letter:

—As Dr. Markiewicz mentions—and as Dr. Faurisson and others have repeatedly stressed—hydrogen cyanide is indeed a volatile substance. However, this point is not directly relevant to the investigation conducted by the Krakow Institute. In contrast to the volatility of hydrogen cyanide, the ferro-ferric-cyanide compounds ("Prussian blue") produced as a result of the interaction of hydrogen cyanide and iron are remarkably stable, as authoritative chemistry reference works confirm.

—The IHR is familiar with the 1945 forensic report referred to by Markiewicz in his letter, and more will be said about it in a forthcoming issue of the *Journal*.

(A letter similar to the one sent by Weber to Dr. Markiewicz was also sent to the Auschwitz State Museum. So far, though, no response has been received to that inquiry.)

"Jewish Soap"

MARK WEBER

One of the most lurid and slanderous Holocaust claims is the story that the Germans manufactured soap from the bodies of their victims. Although a similar charge during the First World War was exposed as a hoax almost immediately afterwards, it was nevertheless revived and widely believed during the Second.[1] More important, this accusation was "proved" at the main Nuremberg trial of 1945-1946, and has been authoritatively endorsed by numerous historians in the decades since. In recent years, though, as part of a broad retreat from the most obviously untenable aspects of the "orthodox" extermination story, Holocaust historians have grudgingly conceded that the human soap tale is a wartime propaganda lie. In their retreat, though, these historians have tried to dismiss the soap story as a mere wartime "rumor," neglecting to mention that international Jewish organizations and then Allied governments endorsed and sanctioned this libelous canard.

Wartime rumors that the Germans were manufacturing soap from the corpses of slaughtered Jews were based in part on the fact that soap bars distributed by German authorities in Jewish ghettos and camps bore the impressed initials "RIF," which many took to stand for "Rein jüdisches Fett" or "Pure Jewish Fat." (It did not seem to matter that the letters were "RIF" and not "RJF.") These rumors spread so widely in 1941 and 1942 that by late 1942 German authorities in Poland and Slovakia were expressing official concern about their impact.[2]

According to a Polish source quoted in a secret wartime U.S. Army military intelligence report, for example, the Germans were operating a "human soap factory" in 1941 at Turek, Poland. "The Germans had brought thousands of Polish teachers, priests and Jews there and after extracting the blood serum from their bodies, had thrown them in large pots and melted off grease to make soap," the intelligence report added.[3]

Macabre "Jewish soap" jokes became popular in the ghettos and camps, and many non-Jews on the outside came to believe the story. When trains loaded with Jewish deportees stopped temporarily at rail stations, Poles reportedly would gleefully shout at them: "Jews to soap!"[4] Even British prisoners of war interned at Auschwitz in 1944 testified later about the wartime rumors that corpses of gassing victims were being turned into soap there.[5]

In spite of its inherently incredible character, the soap story became an important feature of Jewish and Allied war propaganda. Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, wartime head of both the World Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Congress, publicly charged in November 1942 that Jewish corpses were being "processed into such war-vital commodities as soap, fats and fertilizer" by the Germans. He further announced that the Germans were "even exhuming the dead for the value of the corpses," and were paying fifty marks for each body.[6]

In late 1942, the *Congress Weekly*, published by the American Jewish Congress, editorialized that the Germans were turning Jews "by scientific methods of dissolution into fertilizer, soap and glue." An article in the same issue reported that Jewish deportees from France and Holland were being processed into "soap, glue and train oil" in at least two special factories in Germany.[7] Typical of many other American periodicals, the influential *New Republic* reported in early 1943 that the Germans were "using the bodies of their Jewish victims to make soap and fertilizer in a factory at Siedlce."[8]

During June and July 1943, two prominent representatives of the Moscow-based "Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee" toured the United States and raised more than two million dollars for the Soviet war effort at a series of mass meetings. At each of these rallies, Soviet Jewish leader Solomon Mikhoels showed the crowd a bar of soap that he said was made from Jewish corpses.[9]

After the war the soap story was given important legitimacy at the main Nuremberg trial. L. N. Smirnov, Chief Counsellor of Justice for the USSR, declared to the Tribunal:

> . . . The same base, rationalized SS technical minds which created gas chambers and murder vans, began devising such methods of complete annihilation of human bodies, which would not only conceal the traces of their crimes, but also to serve in the manufacturing of certain products. In the Danzig

> Anatomical Institute, semi-industrial experiments in the production of soap from human bodies and the tanning of human skin for industrial purposes were carried out.

Smirnov quoted at length from an affidavit by Sigmund Mazur, an Institute employee, which was accepted as Nuremberg exhibit USSR-197. It alleged that Dr. Rudolf Spanner, the head of the Danzig Institute, had ordered the production of soap from corpses in 1943. According to Mazur's affidavit, Dr. Spanner's operation was of interest to high-ranking German officials. Education Minister Bernhard Rust and Health Leader Dr. Leonardo Conti, as well as professors from other medical institutes, came to witness Spanner's efforts. Mazur also claimed to have used the "human soap" to wash himself and his laundry.[10]

A human soap "recipe," allegedly prepared by Dr. Spanner (Nuremberg document USSR-196), was also presented. Finally, a sample of what was supposed to be a piece of "human soap" was submitted to the Nuremberg Tribunal as exhibit USSR-393.

In his closing address to the Tribunal, chief British prosecutor Sir Hartley Shawcross echoed his Soviet colleague: "On occasion, even the bodies of their [the Germans'] victims were used to make good the wartime shortage of soap."[11] And in their final judgment, the Nuremberg Tribunal judges found that "attempts were made to utilize the fat from the bodies of the victims in the commercial manufacture of soap." [12]

It is worth emphasizing here that the "evidence" presented at the Nuremberg Tribunal for the bogus soap story was no less substantial than the "evidence" presented for the claims of mass extermination in "gas chambers." At least in the former case, an actual sample of soap supposedly made from corpses was submitted in evidence.

After the war, supposed Holocaust victims were solemnly buried, in the form of soap bars, in Jewish cemeteries. In 1948, for example, four such bars wrapped in a funeral shroud were ceremoniously buried according to Jewish religious ritual at the Haifa cemetery in Israel.[13] Other bars of "Jewish soap" have been displayed as grim Holocaust relics at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, the Stutthof Museum near Gdansk (Danzig), the Yivo Institute in New York, the Holocaust Museum in Philadelphia, the Jewish Holocaust Centre in Melbourne (Australia), and at various locations in Israel.[14]

Numerous Jews who lived in German ghettos and camps during the war helped keep the soap story alive many years later. Ben Edelbaum, for example, wrote in his 1980 memoir *Growing Up in the Holocaust*:[15]

> Often with our rations in the ghettos, the Germans had included a bar of soap branded with initials R.J.F. which came to be known as "Rif" soap. It wasn't until the war had ended that we learned the horrible truth about the bar of soap. Had we known in the ghetto, every bar of "Rif" soap would have been accorded a sacred Jewish funeral in the cemetery at Marysin. As it was, we were completely oblivious to its origin and used the bones and flesh of our murdered loved ones to wash our bodies.

Nesse Godin was transferred from a ghetto in Lithuania to the Stutthof concentration camp in the spring of 1944. In a 1983 interview, she recalled her arrival there:[16]

> That day they gave us a shower and a piece of soap. After the war we found out the soap was made out of pure Jew fat, Rein Juden Fett, marked in the initials on the soap that I washed with. For all I know sometimes maybe there was a little bit of my father's fat in that soap that I washed with. How do you think I feel when I think about that?

Mel Mermelstein, the former Auschwitz inmate who was featured in the sensationalized April 1991 cable television movie "Never Forget" (and who is currently suing the Institute for Historical Review and three other defendants for $ 11 million), declared in a 1981 sworn deposition that he and other camp inmates used soap bars made from human fat. It was an "established fact," he insisted, that the soap he washed with was made from Jewish bodies.[17]

Renowned "Nazi hunter" Simon Wiesenthal repeated the soap tale in a series of articles published in 1946 in the Austrian Jewish community paper *Der Neue Weg*. In the first of these he wrote:[18]

> During the last weeks of March the Romanian press reported an unusual piece of news: In the small Romanian city of Folticeni twenty boxes of soap were buried in the Jewish cemetery with full ceremony and complete funeral rites. This soap had been found recently in a former German army depot. On the boxes were the initials RIF, "Pure Jewish Fat." These boxes were destined for the Waffen-SS. The wrapping paper revealed with completely cynical objectivity that this soap was

> manufactured from Jewish bodies. Surprisingly, the thorough Germans forgot to describe whether the soap was produced from children, girls, men or elderly persons.

Wiesenthal went on:

> After 1942 people in the General Government [Poland] knew quite well what the RIF soap meant. The civilized world may not believe the joy with which the Nazis and their women in the General Government thought of this soap. In each piece of soap they saw a Jew who had been magically put there, and had thus been prevented from growing into a second Freud, Ehrlich or Einstein.

In another article he observed: "The production of soap from human fat is so unbelievable that even some who were in concentration camps find it difficult to comprehend."[19]

Over the years, numerous supposedly reputable historians have promoted the durable soap story.[20] Journalist-historian William L. Shirer, for example, repeated it in his best-selling work, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich.*[21] Leading Soviet war propagandist Ilya Ehrenburg wrote in his postwar memoir: "I have held in my hand a cake of soap stamped with the legend 'pure Jewish soap', prepared from the corpses of people who had been destroyed. But there is no need to speak of these things: thousands of books have been written about them."[22]

A standard history studies textbook used in Canadian secondary schools, *Canada: The Twentieth Century*, told students that the Germans "boiled" the corpses of their Jewish victims "to make soap."[23] *The Anatomy of Nazism*, a booklet published and distributed by the Zionist "Anti-Defamation League" of B'nai B'rith, stated: "The process of brutalization did not end with the mass murders themselves. Large quantities of soap were manufactured from the corpses of those murdered."[24]

A detailed 1981 work, *Hitler's Death Camps*, repeated the soap story in lurid detail. While noting that "some historians claim that the Nazi manufacture of soap from human fat is just a grim rumor," author Konnilyn Feig nevertheless accepted the story because "most East European camp scholars . . . validate the soap stories, and other kinds of bars made from humans are displayed in Eastern Europe—I have seen many over the years."[25]

New York Rabbi Arthur Schneier repeated the tale at the

opening ceremony of the largest Holocaust meeting in history. In his invocation to the "American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors," held in Washington in April 1983, the Rabbi solemnly declared: "We remember the bars of soap with the initials RJF—Rein jüdisches Fett, Pure Jewish Fat—made from the bodies of our loved ones."[26]

In spite of all the apparently impressive evidence, the charge that the Germans manufactured soap from human beings is a falsehood, as Holocaust historians are now belatedly acknowledging. The "RIF" soap bar initials that supposedly stood for "Pure Jewish Fat" actually indicated nothing more sinister than "Reich Center for Industrial Fat Provisioning" ("Reichsstelle für Industrielle Fettversorgung"), a German agency responsible for wartime production and distribution of soap and washing products. RIF soap was a poor quality substitute that contained no fat at all, human or otherwise. [27]

Shortly after the war the public prosecutor's office of Flensburg, Germany, began legal proceedings against Dr. Rudolf Spanner for his alleged role in producing human soap at the Danzig Institute. But after an investigation the charge was quietly dropped. In a January 1968 letter, the office stated that its inquiry had determined that no soap from human corpses was made at the Danzig Institute during the war.[28]

More recently, Jewish historian Walter Laqueur "denied established history" by acknowledging in his 1980 book, *The Terrible Secret*, that the human soap story has no basis in reality.[29] Gitta Sereny, another Jewish historian, noted in her book *Into That Darkness*: "The universally accepted story that the corpses were used to make soap and fertilizer is finally refuted by the generally very reliable Ludwigsburg Central Authority for Investigation into Nazi Crimes."[30] Deborah Lipstadt, a professor of modern Jewish history, similarly "rewrote history" when she confirmed in 1981: "The fact is that the Nazis never used the bodies of Jews, or for that matter anyone else, for the production of soap."[31]

In April 1990, professor Yehuda Bauer of Israel's Hebrew University, regarded as a leading Holocaust historian, as well as Shmuel Krakowski, archives director of Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust center, confirmed that the human soap story is not true. Camp inmates "were prepared to believe any horror stories about their persecutors," Bauer said. At the same time, though, he had the chutzpah to blame the legend on "the Nazis."[32]

In fact, blame for the soap story lies rather with individuals such as Simon Wiesenthal and Stephen Wise, organizations like the World Jewish Congress, and the victorious Allied powers, none of whom has ever apologized for promoting this vile falsehood.

Why did Bauer and Krakowski decide that *this* was the appropriate time to officially abandon the soap story? Krakowski himself hints that a large part of the motivation for this "tactical retreat" has been to save what's left of the sinking Holocaust ship by throwing overboard the most obvious falsehoods. In the face of the growing Revisionist challenge, easily demonstrable falsehoods like the soap story have become dangerous embarrassments because they raise doubts about the entire Holocaust legend. As Krakowski put it: "Historians have concluded that soap was not made from human fat. When so many people deny the Holocaust ever happened, why give them something to use against the truth?"[33]

The bad faith of those making this calculated and belated concession to truth is shown by their failure to note that the soap myth was authoritatively "confirmed" at Nuremberg, and by their unwillingness to deal with the implications of that confirmation for the credibility of the Tribunal and other supposedly trustworthy authorities in establishing other, more fundamental aspects of the Holocaust story.

The striking contrast between the prompt postwar disavowal by the British government of the infamous "human soap" lie of the First World War, and the way in which a similarly baseless propaganda story from the Second World War was officially endorsed by the victorious Allied powers and then authoritatively maintained for so many years, not only points up a dispiriting lack of integrity on the part of so many Western historians, but underscores a general decline in Western ethical standards during this century.

The "human soap" story demonstrates anew the tremendous impact that a wartime rumor, no matter how fantastic, can have once it has taken hold, particularly when it is disseminated as a propaganda lie by influential individuals and powerful organizations. That so many intelligent and otherwise thoughtful people could ever have seriously believed that the Germans distributed bars of soap brazenly labeled with letters indicating that they were manufactured

from Jewish corpses shows how readily even the most absurd Holocaust fables can be—and are—accepted as fact.

Notes

1. During the First World War, the London *Times* was apparently the first Allied paper to report (in April 1917) that the Germans were boiling down the bodies of their dead soldiers to make soap and other products. See: Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty* (New York: 1975), pp. 105-106. This story was quickly picked up by other papers and widely circulated in the British and American press. In 1925, British Foreign Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain admitted that the "corpse factory" story had been a lie. See: Arthur Ponsonby, *Falsehood in Wartime* (New York: 1929), pp. 102, 111-112.; Walter Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret* (Boston: 1988), pp. 8-9.
2. Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New York: 1985), pp. 966-967.; Walter Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret* (Boston: 1980), pp. 54, 82, 145, 219.; U.S. State Department document 740.001 16 (from 1943), facsimile in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (New York and Jerusalem: 1971), vol. 13, pp. 759-760.; Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe* (London: 1979), p. 169.; A September 1941 Einsatzgruppen Security Police report from the Ukraine mentioned equally baseless rumors, reportedly spread by Jews, of a supposed Soviet biological warfare plague bacteria bomb. Even some German soldiers believed the stories. (*Ereignismeldung UdSSR*, No. 80, Sept. 11, 1941, p. 9.)
3. Secret U.S. Army military intelligence report No. 50, April 27, 1945. National Archives, National Records Center (Suitland, Maryland), RG 153 (JAG Army), Box 497, Files 19-22, Books I and II, Entry 143.
4. Nachman Blumental, "RIF," *Yiddish Culture*, Vol. 21, June-July 1959. (Monthly of the Yiddish Culture Association). Apparently published in Israel in Hebrew. A German translation of the original essay was obtained by Ditlieb Felderer through the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Jerusalem. I am grateful to him for a copy.
5. Douglas T. Frost affidavit, July 16, 1947. Nuremberg document NI-11692. *Trials of the War Criminals Before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals* (NMT "green series"; Washington, DC: 1949-1953), Vol. 8, p. 624.; As noted below in footnote 10, this rumor was authoritatively "confirmed" at the Nuremberg Tribunal.
6. "Wise Says Hitler Had Ordered 4,000,000 Jews Slain in 1942," *New York Herald-Tribune* (Associated Press), Nov. 25, 1942. pp. 1, 5.; "2 Million Jews Slain by Nazis, Dr. Wise Avers," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Nov. 25, 1942.; *New York Times*, Nov. 26, 1942, p. 16.; See also: Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (1985), p. 1118.

7. "The Spirit Will Triumph" (editorial), and "Corpses for Hitler," p. 11, *Congress Weekly* (New York: American Jewish Congress), Dec. 4, 1942.
8. *New Republic*, Jan. 18, 1943, p. 65. See also the Communist *New Masses* editorial of Dec. 8, 1942. p. 21. Both quoted in: James J. Martin, *The Man Who Invented "Genocide"*, (IHR, 1984), pp. 64, 45.; One of the few sober voices among all the hysteria was *The Christian Century*, which cautioned in a December 9, 1942, editorial: "Dr. Wise's allegation that Hitler is paying $20 each for Jewish corpses to be 'processed into soap, fats and fertilizer' is unpleasantly reminiscent of the 'cadaver factory' lie which was one of the propaganda triumphs of the First World War." Quoted in: Robert W. Ross, *So It Was True* (Minneapolis: 1980), p. 157.
9. Gerard Israel, *The Jews in Russia* (New York: St. Martin's, 1975), p. 180.
10. Smirnov statement, Feb. 19, 1946. International Military Tribunal, *Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal* (IMT "blue series"; Nuremberg: 1947-1949), vol. 7, pp. 597-600. Note also Soviet allegation that soap was manufactured from the bodies of people gassed at Auschwitz: IMT ("blue series"), vol. 7, p. 175.; Translation of USSR-197 and other Nuremberg Tribunal (IMT) references to the human soap story in: Carlos Porter, *Made in Russia: The Holocaust* (1988), pp. 73, 85-86, 121-124, 126, 128, 159, 368-377.; Note also Nuremberg Tribunal "human soap" documents USSR-196, USSR-264, and USSR-272.; We are grateful to Mr. Carlos Porter for his diligent research of the Nuremberg Tribunal's treatment of the "human soap" story.
11. IMT ("blue series"), vol. 19, p. 506.; *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression* (NC&A "red series"; Washington, DC: 1946-1948), Suppl. vol. A, p. 134. See also: "Nazis' Soap Factory Used Humans, American Reports" (AP) *The Sunday Star* (Washington, DC) Dec. 9, 1945. p. B-11.
12. IMT ("blue series"), vol. 1, p. 252. Facsimile reprint in: Carlos Porter, *Made in Russia* (1988), p. 159.
13. Pierre Joffroy, "Anne Frank Martyre," *Paris Match*, No. 394, Oct. 27, 1956, p. 93.
14. R. Hilberg, *Destruction of the European Jews* (1985), p. 967 (n.27).; N. Blumental, "RIF," *Yiddish Culture*, June-July 1959 (cited above).; Rabbi Yaakov (Jacob) Riz runs the Holocaust Museum at 1453 Levick St., Philadelphia. See his letter in the *Jewish Press* (Brooklyn), July 10, 1981, p. 42.; Udo Walendy, *Adolf Eichmann*, Historische Tatsachen No. 18, (Vlotho: 1983), p. 24.; Gary Tippet, "Real-life chamber of horrors," *The Sun* (Melbourne), Feb. 7, 1984.
15. B. Edelbaum, *Growing up in the Holocaust* (Kansas City, Mo.: 1980), pp. 217-218.
16. Jane S. Podesta, "Nesse Godin's memories . . .", *The Washington Times*, April 11, 1983, pp. 12B, 13B.
17. M. Mermelstein deposition, Los Angeles, May 27, 1981, official transcript, p. 40. (Case No. C 356 542)

18. S. Wiesenthal, "RIF," *Der Neue Weg* (Vienna), Nr. 17/18, 1946, pp. 4-5.; See also: S. Wiesenthal, "Seifenfabrik Belsetz," *Der Neue Weg*, Nr. 19/20, 1946, pp. 14-15, and: S. Wiesenthal, "Nochmals RIF," *Der Neue Weg*, Nr. 21/22, 1946. p. 2.; These articles are also cited in: M. Weber, "Simon Wiesenthal: Bogus 'Nazi Hunter'," *Journal of Historical Review*, Winter 1989-90, pp. 444-445.

19. S. Wiesenthal, "Nochmals RIF," *Der Neue Weg* (Vienna), Nr. 21/22, 1946, p. 2.

20. Some published works claiming that the Germans manufactured soap from human corpses: "Poland," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1971), Vol. 13, pp. 761-762 (Photo caption: "A German soap factory near Danzig".; Alexander Werth, *Russia at War 1941-1945* (New York: Avon, 1965, pb.), p. 918.; Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Days of Remembrance: A Department of Defense Guide for Commemerative Observance* (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1988), p. 18.; Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland* (New York: Columbia Univ., 1982), vol. 2, p. 457.; Max Weinreich *Hitler's Professors* (New York: Yivo, 1946), p. 200.; Leon Poliakov and J. Wulf, *Das Dritte Reich und seine Diener* (East Berlin: Volk und Welt, 1975), p. 165 (photo caption).; Gershon Taffet, ed, *Extermination of Polish Jews* (Lodz: Central Jewish Historical Committee in Poland, 1945), p. 96 (photo caption).; Joseph Borkin, *The Crime and Punishment of I.G. Farben* (New York: Free Press, 1978) p. 126.; Max I. Dimont, *Jews, God and History* (New York: Signet, 1962 ?, pb.), p. 382.; Gizelle Hersh and P. Mann *"Gizelle, Save the Children!"* (New York: Everest, 1980), p. 210.; Robert W. Ross, *So It Was True* (Minneapolis: 1980), p. 158.; Kitty Hart, *I Am Alive* (London: Abelard-Schuman, 1962), p. 105.; See also: Elie Wiesel, *Legends of Our Time* (New York: Holt, Rinehard and Winston, 1968), pp. 174-175.; H. Kamm, "Elie Wiesel's Hometown," *The New York Times*, Dec. 9, 1986, p. A9.; The soap legend is repeated on a Holocaust memorial erected in 1990 at Miami Beach, Fla., See: M. Bell, "Holocaust Memorial," *Orlando* (Fla.) *Sentinel*, Jan. 28, 1990, p. G2.

21. Wm. Shirer, *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (New York: 1960), p. 971 (note).

22. Ilya Ehrenburg, *The War: 1941-1945* (Cleveland: World, 1965), p. 30.

23. Fred McFadden, et al., *Canada: The Twentieth Century* (Toronto: 1982), section entitled "The Holocaust."

24. Earl Raab, *The Anatomy of Nazism* (New York: ADL, 1979), p. 20.

25. Konnilyn G. Feig, *Hitler's Death Camps* (New York: 1981), pp. 200-202, 479 (n. 19)

26. This writer was present at the opening ceremony held at the Landover, Md., Capital Center, on Monday evening, April 11, 1983. Schneier was Rabbi at Park East Synagogue, New York City. The crowd of some 15,000 was later addressed by President Reagan.

27. N. Blumental "RIF" *Yiddish Culture*, June-July 1959 (cited above). See also: R. Faurisson, "Le savon juif," *Annales d'Histoire Revisionniste* (Paris), No. 1, Printemps 1987, pp. 153-159, and, D. Felderer, "Human

Soap," *Journal of Historical Review*, Summer 1980, pp. 131-139.; *Dachauer Hefte*: "Die Befreiung" (Dachau), Heft 1, Dec. 1985, p. 111 (n. 7).

28. Erich Kern (Kernmayer), *Meineid Gegen Deutschland* (1971), pp. 152-163. See also: *Deutsche Wochen-Zeitung* (Munich), March 29, 1991, pp. 3, 9.
29. Walter Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret* (Boston: 1980), pp. 82, 219.
30. Gitta Sereny, *Into That Darkness* (London: A. Deutsch, 1974), p. 141 (note).
31. "Nazi Soap Rumor During World War II," *Los Angeles Times*, May 16, 1981, p. II/2.
32. "Holocaust Expert Rejects Charge That Nazis Made Soap From Jews," *Northern California Jewish Bulletin*, April 27, 1990. (JTA dispatch from Tel Aviv.) Facsimile in: *Christian News*, May 21, 1990, p. 19.; "A Holocaust Belief Cleared Up," *Chicago Tribune*, April 25, 1990. Facsimile in: *Ganpac Brief*, June 1990, p. 8.
33. "A Holocaust Belief Cleared Up," *Chicago Tribune*, April 25, 1990.

INGRID WECKERT

FLASH POINT

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Reviews

A Forgettable, But Survivable, Hatchet Job on IHR

NEVER FORGET. Produced by Robert Radnitz. Directed by Joseph Sargent. Turner Pictures, Inc. 1991. 2 hours.

Reviewed by Tom Marcellus

Never Forget, Turner Broadcasting's version of the "Mel Mermelstein story," which hit the airwaves nationwide via the TNT cable network on the evening of April 8, 1991—and in at least seven airings during the week that followed—was a pretty forgettable effort. The drama fell far short of both poetry and truth. Nevertheless, *Never Forget* did serve as a timely reminder to many—and an introduction to many more—that there is a Revisionist movement, and an Institute for Historical Review, which challenge a version of the Second World War, and its sacrosanct "Holocaust," that until the appearance of *Never Forget* were presented as uncontested truth on America's most influential mass medium.

As *Never Forget* begins, this disclaimer rolls across the screen:

> While certain scenes are adapted from incidents in the lives of the Mermelstein family and other individuals, all legal proceedings portrayed are based on actual transcripts and documents.

Like much that follows in the docudrama, these words are deceptive. In fact *Never Forget* materially falsifies testimony and court proceedings, as well as fracturing history and truth in fact and in spirit from start to finish.

The story of the Mermelstein affair has been truncated, partly to keep production costs down (ergo, no Auschwitz stage sets) but also to represent the judicial notice taken by Judge Thomas Johnson that "Jews were gassed to death at the Auschwitz Concentration Camp in Poland in 1944" as a signal legal and historical victory which effectively ended the lawsuit. Thus, viewers are spared the dull story of the nearly four years of legal maneuvering which followed, by which

Mermelstein and his lawyers sought to destroy IHR, and thus Historical Revisionism, in America.

The Mel Mermelstein of *Never Forget*, as played by Leonard Nimoy of *Star Trek* notoriety, is a prosperous businessman, happy family man, and pillar of the community, not the man whom a Los Angeles Jewish newspaper, quoting "members of the Jewish community" and a "close friend" of Mermelstein, described as "a difficult moody man" and "his own worst enemy" ("Mermelstein, Hailed As a Hero, Stood Virtually Alone During Holocaust Trial," *Israel Today*, August 2, 1985, pp. 6, 18). His wife Jane, as played by Blythe Danner, is nothing less than a transplanted Southern belle, while his three sons and one daughter make a convincingly half-Jewish, all-American brood (for reasons which are obscure, daughter Edie is presented in *Never Forget* as a 12-year-old, rather than the high-school graduate she actually was at the time).

When he receives a letter from the Institute challenging him to, in effect, put up or shut up following his public challenge to lead IHR's Editorial Advisory board to the exact spot at which he witnessed "the actual gassings of men, women, and little children in gas chambers disguised as shower rooms," Mermelstein-Nimoy's earlier bravado seems to crumble. But he is nonetheless determined to call IHR's bluff by providing proof that yes, Jews were gassed at Auschwitz, and thus claim the $50,000 reward which had been offered, withdrawn when nobody complied with the stated rules of evidence (those of American criminal courts), and then offered again to Mermelstein (without authorization from IHR's Board of Directors) by Director David McCalden, writing under the name "Lewis Brandon."

Mermelstein-Nimoy calls first on the Los Angeles office of the Anti-Defamation League, then on the Simon Wiesenthal Center for professional advice and legal help in getting the best of the Institute. But both groups turn him away, assuring him that although the IHR is composed of "professional liars and haters," he is likely to cause American Jewry more harm than good by giving them a public forum. Besides, both groups have busy schedules (Rabbi Hier's Wiesenthal Center alone is on the trail of 400 "Nazi war criminals"!). Mermelstein-Nimoy goes away dispirited, sadder if not wiser, still resolved to confront and beat IHR.

These scenes have a double meaning for the perceptive Revisionist, and the second meaning is by no means

deleterious. Most readers of these pages should take heart from the glad tidings that Holocaust Revisionism "is cropping up every place," according to Rabbi Hier of the SWC, who also notes that "we see this sort of thing all the time," and " [the IHR] is the largest racist and anti-Semitic group in the country . . . well-funded, spread out all over the country, with newspapers, radio and television outlets . . . just the tip of the iceberg." (Elsewhere in the movie, IHR is referred to in no less flattering terms: as part of "an empire of hate—connected, well-funded," and a group of "liars and bullies," whose books "you find when you look under rocks.")

Still, the obsessive (he's embarrassed even his eldest son with his fixation on Auschwitz) Mermelstein-Nimoy is not about to give up. He draws up a list of 16 lawyers whom he contacts one by one, all of whom also turn him down. Through all this, the hero is given spiritual sustenance by visits to his homemade Holocaust museum, where he reminisces in view of the old shoes, artifacts made from barbed wire, cakes of soap, pictures and other memorabilia he has accumulated over the years.

Then wife Jane has an idea: why not contact William Cox, a Gentile lawyer who has done business with Mermelstein in the past but curiously was not on his list of potential attorneys. Cox, who is portrayed by Dabney Coleman as the very stereotype of the "lovable curmudgeon" into which TV alchemy can always be counted on to transform ideologically acceptable cranks, ultimately accepts, after the required drama of first turning Mermelstein-Nimoy down and then waking him up at 2 a.m. to say he'll take the case, supposedly *pro bono*, i.e., without fee. And although Cox doesn't know "how much these liars and bullies are willing to pour into the case," after communing with himself among the paraphernalia of his Holocaust museum Mermelstein-Nimoy courageously decides to go ahead with the task of making everyone remember the last words he ever heard from his father, the plea to son Mel to "never forget" (oddly enough, Mermelstein seems to have forgotten these words when writing his allegedly autobiographical *By Bread Alone*—they appear nowhere therein).

On December 18, 1980, Cox writes IHR to tell the Institute of his client's acceptance of the reward offer, enclosing Mermelstein-Nimoy's "evidence" of gassing—a sworn statement in which he details his witnessing his mother and

three sisters enter an Auschwitz "gas chamber," and a list of other alleged witnesses to bolster his story.

A ploy is hit on by which IHR will be sued for breach of contract if it does not respond within thirty days, and Mermelstein-Nimoy sweats out the waiting period, dogging his family, Cox, and bemused letter carriers to make sure that the all-important IHR response (which in any case would be addressed to Cox) has *not* come. It doesn't (not by the Cox-Mermelstein deadline, anyway), and it's off to the courts.

What does come to Mermelstein-Nimoy's home through the mail in this deceitful drama, however, is some "hair of a gassed Jewish victim" and "pure Jewish fat" (a piece of soap). The clear implication of this emotive scene (Mermelstein's young daughter opens the envelope and shrieks in terror) is that the "haters and deniers" have violated the sanctity of Mermelstein's hearth and home with something base and obscene. That the Germans made soap neither from Jews nor anyone else during the war, and that there would be no way to distinguish the hair of a "gassed" concentration inmate from that of a "survivor," since the Germans customarily deloused the shorn hair of inmates, are facts lost on television audiences, most of whom must think: "What despicable monsters these Revisionists must be!"

By now Mermelstein-Nimoy is reeling from the (imaginary) onslaught of the "bigots." His family is buckling too: the kids (except for his adoring daughter) haven't been supportive enough, and even his wife is dubious about pursuing the case against the Institute. By now the television Mermelsteins are convinced they're dealing with the whole phantasmagoria of "extremists" and "terrorists," and that their very property and lives may be in danger.

There are other reverses as Mermelstein-Nimoy begins to search for other "eyewitnesses" to corroborate his story. His first choice, an old woman of evidently long-standing acquaintance, comes unglued at the mention of Auschwitz: the Gestapo still has the habit of dropping in on her in the dead of night (he doesn't find a better "eyewitness" in the drama, although in real life Mermelstein offered Miklos Nyiszli, dead for some thirty years, to back up his reward claim).

There are still more pressures on Mermelstein-Nimoy. His pallet manufacturing business begins to suffer because he

can't remember delivery promises, so consumed he is by his obsession with the case. Next, an anonymous miscreant throws a dead pig on his doorstep, and Mermelstein-Nimoy receives an anonymous phone call one night to inform him that his business is on fire (after Mermelstein-Nimoy and son race to the pallet company, the call proves to be a false alarm).

Nerves wearing thin, Mermelstein-Nimoy and Cox infiltrate a meeting of the "National Legion of Patriots," at which the speaker (conveniently at that very moment) is in the middle of a harangue about the myth of the Holocaust. Mermelstein-Nimoy, enraged by what is in fact a pretty fair summation of the basic Revisionist case, tries to shout him down. Cox wrestles him out of the meeting as the audience, faces red with bulging veins and contorted with hate, scream insults and slurs—it's a far trek from *Star Trek* for the poker-faced icon who was Mr. Spock.

Then it's on to the IHR's first deposition of Mermelstein-Nimoy, in which he is sworn to answer questions from the Institute fully and truthfully. This is of course represented as a sadistic ordeal, with both IHR's counsel, Richard Fusilier, and this reviewer (both of us named) harassing Mel with cruel questions about his experiences at Auschwitz. To show how sneaky IHR's director is, I am chastised for smuggling a microcassette recorder into the deposition in my jacket pocket, which Mel discovers—a real feat since microcassette recorders were not even on the market at that time. (And I cannot let it pass that the actor who played me was plump, gray-haired, 25 years too old, and decidedly uglier than me—a personal insult for which I'll forgive Mel if he will only let us alone.)

After the harrowing ordeal of the exhausting deposition (the plaintiff was suffered the indignity of having to answer hard questions about his concentration-camp experiences), Mermelstein-Nimoy confesses to his family that he might lose the case because of Fusilier's tricky questions or because, at a key moment, he might forget or get crossed up on some tiny detail about the gas chambers. But finally there comes the great and historic day in the courtroom of Judge Thomas Johnson, who after hearing a heart-rending witness-stand account of Mermelstein's personal experiences at Auschwitz, and his promise to his father "never to forget," takes judicial notice that the Holocaust is a fact not subject to reasonable

dispute. Much joy and celebration. The End (of this docudrama, anyway).

If the viewer has remained awake through this dishwater-dull, soap-operatic nonsense, he or she may be interested in an accounting of what was actually true and what was demonstrably false in *Never Forget.* In fact, a lengthy list of material distortions and falsehoods, as well as lesser violations of the truth made in hopes of livening up the turgid Melodrama—could be compiled. Here are just a few of them:

• The drama represents the initial letter sent to Mermelstein as part of a deliberate IHR plot to harass the "survivor." In fact the letter re-opening the reward offer was undertaken entirely on the initiative of the late David McCalden, then director of IHR, who consulted neither the Institute's board nor its founder. (The announcement that the $50,000 reward offer for proof of gassings at Auschwitz had officially expired was made at the Second International Revisionist Conference. The full and detailed story of the reward offer is told in the booklet *Worldwide Growth and Impact of Holocaust Revisionism*, which is still available from IHR.) McCalden was shortly discharged, after subsequent incidents gave further evidence of irresponsibility, and even hostility, to the interests of IHR.

All the same, in regard to the initial letter to Mermelstein, *Never Forget* veers, briefly and unexpectedly, toward something of the truth, as opposed to his counsels' representations at the time and subsequently. In his *actual* letter of December 18, 1980, Cox represented that the way in which the evidence submitted to claim the reward would be judged was still undecided, suggesting that the proceeding be televised and then voted on by the TV audience. Thereafter, Mermelstein, Cox, and their successors swore ignorance of any other proposed method of judgement—*including the specification that IHR would choose the judges—despite the fact that a sheet of rules including IHR's choice of the judges was routinely sent with every reward application. Never Forget,* however, has Cox speaking dismissively of the Institute's "kangaroo court," and not tailoring his case to a jury of couch potatoes; and Cox makes quite clear in the drama that his strategy is based on luring IHR into the courts.

• Never in any of his depositions has Mermelstein ever referred to "gassed" hair, "Jewish fat" or a dead pig being

delivered to his home. In fact, the closest such incident this reviewer can recall was the depositing of a dead pig, owned up to by one Irv Rubin, on the porch of a Jew who'd run afoul of Rubin through his alleged sympathies for the Palestinians, about five years ago. Rubin, chief of the terroristic Jewish Defense League, once stated on Los Angeles television that "Mermelstein is one of our financial supporters," although Mel denies supporting the JDL or ever meeting Rubin.

- The reviewer has never heard of a "National Legion of Patriots," nor is there any record of Mel ever crashing any meeting at which Holocaust Revisionism was being promoted. Out of exemplary fairness, however, IHR did invite William Cox to speak briefly at the Third International Revisionist Conference held in Los Angeles in November of 1981. Cox appeared, said his piece (chastising the audience for attending a conference sponsored by a group with such anti-Semitic views), and was treated politely.

- The claim put in Nimoy-Mermelstein's mouth during his deposition, that his brother, like his father, was "worked to death" in the coal mines of the Auschwitz sub-camp at Jaworzno, is a fabrication of the docudrama. In the acutal deposition Mermelstein says nothing of the circumstances of his brother's alleged death; elsewhere, Mermelstein has claimed that his brother was shot for refusing to take part in an evacuation march (which to the German guards could only have been tantamount to an escape attempt). A small thing, perhaps, but an irrefutable indication of the liberties *Never Again* has taken with the legal record—and perhaps a sign of Mermelstein's continuing inclination to alter his stories, or at least acquiesce in errors made by others (during the deposition in question, Mermelstein claimed his father died "of torture, hunger, and also because of inability to see his son suffer and being beaten and tortured," but in an article which appeared in the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner* on February 15, 1981, reporter Timothy Carlson quoted Mermelstein as saying that he had seen his *father* as well as his mother and sisters led off to the gas chambers. And there is solid evidence for *other* Mermelstein versions of his father's death.)

- There is no record of Mel ever receiving a crank call that his business had been set aflame. However, on the night of July 4, 1984 the office and warehouse of the Institute for

Historical Review was totally destroyed by arson, a crime that the authorities have never seriously investigated and which set the IHR back by years and some $400,000.

• Whatever were the difficulties Mermelstein had in recruiting an attorney at the outset (and they seem overdrawn to say the least), there has been no shortage of free legal help through most of his ten-year crusade against IHR and Revisionism: there has been a legion of top-flight lawyers at his beck and call. He has enjoyed important support from important segments of the Jewish community (despite his initial dismissal by those influential Jewish groups he first turned to for help). Nor has the judiciary of Los Angeles County and the press been anything except extremely supportive of him. The alleged "facts" dramatized in the film are directly contradicted by the actual record. It was IHR that was almost unable to file a timely answer to Mermelstein's original complaint in 1980 because no lawyer, even noted "civil rights" advocates in the area, would touch the case. Fortunately, one attorney was found, Richard Fusilier, who agreed to represent the IHR because no other attorney in the state of California would take its case.

• In real life Mermelstein is not precisely the normal personality portrayed by Leonard Nimoy. Nowhere in the film is there any mention of the fact that he had been under psychiatric care long before IHR, and the emotional distress its actions allegedly caused him, intruded into his supposedly well-balanced mind and life.

• The drama portrays Mermelstein as a cooperative witness willing, if not eager, to answer Fusilier's questions honestly and completely during the first deposition. *Never Forget* also depicts Mermelstein-Nimoy as finally breaking down into heart-wrenching sobs when the attorney's probing questions become just too much for an Auschwitz "survivor" and "eyewitness" to his mother and sisters' "gassing" to bear. But what in fact took place at that deposition (I was present) was that Mermelstein proved a most elusive respondent: often he seemed unwilling to give a straight answer to even the simplest questions, misunderstanding them, waxing broadly philosophical, forgetting inconvenient details, duelling back and forth with Fusilier and all in all leading IHR's lawyer on a merry chase. At no time during the entire deposition did Mermelstein shed a single tear. On the contrary, he struck me

as hostile, combative, and evasive throughout the entire deposition.

• At the dramatic conclusion of *Never Forget*, Mermelstein-Nimoy takes the witness stand during the crucial hearing at which Judge Johnson ruled on Mermelstein's request for judicial notice that Jews were gassed at Auschwitz during the summer of 1944. The docudrama has Mermelstein touchingly recount the story of his promise to his father to "never forget," whereupon Judge Johnson makes his historic ruling and the movie ends reminding viewers that the fight against bigotry and racism goes on. But the drama's initial assurance that "all legal proceedings portrayed [have been] based on actual transcripts and documents" to the contrary, Mermelstein neither took the stand at that hearing nor gave any testimony whatsoever—the entire scene is pure invention, devised to provide something of an emotional catharsis to what remains a weak, and for the millions undoubtedly soporific, made-for-television movie.

What has been the likely impact of this film on IHR and Revisionism? To be sure, every trick in the smearer's arsenal has been employed (subject to budget limitations, of course). Old hands at Revisionism will immediately note the old trick of ascribing to their enemies that which the Holocaust lobbyists, themselves, are guilty of, thereby turning the truth right over onto its head. Reversed is the fundamental fact that the purpose of Historical Revisionism is not to hector the Mel Mermelsteins and similar blustering Holocaust small-fry but to challenge the mighty, the entrenched establishments and interests which profit from historical falsehood. IHR's only goal, and its only weapon of self-defense, is "to bring history into accord with the facts." In the longer view, Mermelstein and his allies will appear simply as pawns of those much larger and more sinister entities.

That is why, despite *Never Forget's* portrayal of Mermelstein as a sympathetic underdog, it is not the Exterminationists who have trouble recruiting lawyers or raising funds to exist, or who are subjected to continuous barrages of threats, intimidation, assaults, arsons, and even cold-blooded murder. Nor, despite the docudrama's dark murmurings of IHR well-connectedness and far-flung resources, do real-life Revisionists encounter the least bit of objectivity, let alone sympathy, towards their concerns in the press or the

entertainment media—in contrast to the automatic acceptance that even the woolliest and most mean-spirited "survivor" accusations win from these industries.

Above and beyond the Auschwitz lie itself, this is the Big Lie of *Never Forget*—the whopper that the Revisionists are somehow politically powerful, shrewd, bigoted, sadistic and well-connected, while the Exterminationists are weak, innocent, and morally upright.

Not to worry, though. *Never Forget's* liberties with fact are so multifarious that it must fall of its own weight in the eyes of anyone with the slightest knowledge of the facts of the case. Even Gloria Allred, LA law's far-left, fervidly Zionist, cartoonishly "feminist" firebrand, whose firm took over Mermelstein's case from Cox, angrily denounced the film as "historically inaccurate," adding her own brand of Revisionism to the stew.

And now comes the glimmer of truth, the blinding flash of the obvious, as the great American political thinker Lawrence Dennis would have put it. Clearly, the intended purpose of trying to slam, smear and isolate the Revisionists is counterbalanced by two quite unintended messages to the viewer: 1) Historical Revisionism is strong and growing, and 2) the embattled but still mighty IHR is leading this movement, which is of the gravest concern to the Establishment.

An Expert on "Eyewitness" Testimony Faces a Dilemma in the Demjanjuk Case

WITNESS FOR THE DEFENSE by Elizabeth Loftus and Katherine Ketcham. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991. Hardbound. 288 pages. Illustrations. $ 19.95. ISBN: 0-312-05537-4.

Reviewed by John Cobden

Eyewitness testimony is the cornerstone of the Holocaust story. Much more than physical or documentary evidence, the accounts of "Holocaust survivors" have been crucial in convincing people that millions of European Jews

were systematically exterminated in gas chambers during the Second World War.

What few realize is that such "eyewitness" testimony is notoriously inaccurate, biased and, in many cases, blatantly and demonstrably wrong. Jewish historian Samuel Gringauz, for example, once pointed out that:

> . . . most of the memoirs and report [of "Holocaust survivors"] are full of preposterous verbosity, graphomanic exaggeration, dramatic effects, overestimated self-inflation, dilettante philosophizing, would-be lyricism, unchecked rumors, bias, partisan attacks and apologies.

The inaccuracy of Holocaust testimony is not unique, of course. Defective memory and false testimony occur in all aspects of life. It is to this fascinating subject that Dr. Elizabeth Loftus has dedicated her career. As she relates in *Witness for the Defense*, what began as a research project at Stanford University became her life-long calling:

> The study of memory has become my specialty, my passion. In the next few years I wrote dozens of papers about how memory works and how it fails, but unlike most researchers studying memory, my work kept reaching out into the real world. To what extent, I wondered, could a person's memory be shaped by suggestion? When people witness a serious automobile accident, how accurate is their recollection of the facts? If a witness is questioned by a police officer, will the manner of questioning alter the representation of the memory? Can memories be supplemented with additional, false information? (p. 7)

This passion led Loftus to a teaching career at the University of Washington and, perhaps more importantly, into hundreds of courtrooms as an expert witness on the fallibility of eyewitness accounts. As she has explained in numerous trials, and as she convincingly argues in this absorbing book, eyewitness accounts can be and often are so distorted that they no longer resemble the truth.

An understanding of human memory, and how it works, is obviously of crucial importance in comprehending the Holocaust issue. In this regard, Loftus' treatment of how human memory works is relevant in two important ways.

First, she explains how memory works and how it fails. After presenting her general views, she shows how they apply in specific criminal cases. While this treatment does not deal

directly with the Holocaust issue, she makes general points and draws relevant lessons that are crucially relevant.

Second, Loftus tells of her personal involvement in the well-known case of John Demjanjuk, the Ukrainian-born Cleveland auto worker who was tried in Israel and sentenced to death for allegedly helping to kill hundreds of thousands of Jews during the Second World War in the Treblinka camp. In her analysis of the trial, Loftus presents compelling reasons to doubt Demjanjuk's guilt. And even though, as she explains, she felt a professional obligation to come to the aid of the defendant, she ultimately decided not to do so.

As Loftus shows, innocent persons are regularly convicted of crimes they did not commit on the basis of faulty eyewitness testimony. In these cases, the eyewitnesses do not commit perjury. They do not willfully lie, but rather they tell the truth as they have come to believe it. She explains:

> Why, after all, would they lie? Ah, there's the word—*lie*. That's the word that gets us off track. You see, eyewitnesses who point their finger at innocent defendants are not liars, for they genuinely believe in the truth of their testimony. The face that they see before them is the face of the attacker. The face of innocence has become the face of guilt. That's the frightening part—the truly horrifying idea that our memories can be changed, inextricably altered, and that what we think we know, what we believe with all our hearts, is not necessarily the truth. (p. 13)

Loftus provides a striking example of how memories can be distorted. Jean Piaget, the famed child psychologist, tells in his book *Plays, Dreams and Imitation in Childhood* of his vivid memory of a violent attempt to kidnap him as a child. Piaget's nurse saved the boy by fighting off the attacker. Throughout his childhood and early teen years, Piaget had explicit memories of this traumatic event. But when he was fifteen years old, the nurse confessed in a letter to the family that she had created the entire story out of thin air, and that no such kidnapping attempt had ever taken place. Because Piaget had grown up hearing the kidnapping story told to him so vividly, he came to believe it with such certainty that he actually remembered witnessing it himself.

Memory, Loftus tell us, is not a video camera that records events and then later plays them back exactly as originally recorded. Instead, it is an "evolutionary" or evolving process.

Memories are lost and replaced with new memories. Some memories, while retained, change over time and become a pale imitation of the original. As Loftus points out:

> As new bits and pieces of information are added into long-term memory, the old memories are removed, replaced, crumpled up, or shoved into corners. Little details are added, confusing or extraneous elements are deleted, and a coherent construction of the facts is gradually created that may bear little resemblance to the original event.
>
> Memories don't just fade, as the old saying would have us believe; they also grow. What fades is the initial perception, the actual experience of the events. But every time we recall an event, we must reconstruct the memory, and with each recollection the memory may be changed—colored by succeeding events, other people's recollections or suggestions, increased understanding, or a new context.
>
> Truth and reality, when seen through the filter of our memories, are not objective facts but subjective, interpretative realities. We interpret the past, correcting ourselves, adding bits and pieces, deleting uncomplementary or disturbing recollections, sweeping, dusting, tidying things up. Thus our represenation of the past takes on a living, shifting reality; it is not fixed and immutable, not a place way back there that is preserved in stone, but a living thing that changes shape, expands, shrinks, and expands again, an amoebalike creature with powers to make us laugh, and cry, and clench our fists. Enormous powers—powers even to make us believe in something that never happened. (p. 20)

Loftus describes some of the subtle ways in which human memory can be transformed. For instance, an individual's memory can be distorted by information received after the event in question. New information acquired after the event can be fused with the original memory. A person eventually remembers the "new" information so vividly that he cannot distinguish it from the original recollection. The new information, Loftus tell us, may "not only enhance the existing memory, but [will] actually change their memory, even causing non-existent memory to become incorporated into the previously acquired memory (p. 85)." In one study, Loftus showed a cartoon to a group of children, and then asked them about the bear that appeared in it. Even though no bear had appeared in the cartoon, many children had "memories" of it once they were asked about it.

Adult memories operate in fundamentally the same way. While an adult may not suddenly come to "remember" a non-existent experience that never happened, adults can and do come to "remember" non-events over time, and in a more subtle way.

Loftus gives numerous examples from criminal cases of how eyewitness testimony has changed. In one case, a rape victim distinctly remembers that her attacker had no distinguishing mark on his face. The police then arrest a suspect with a scar on his cheek that would hardly have gone unnoticed. Except for this important difference, the suspect fits the description given by the victim. After the victim is called in for further questioning and is asked about a scar, she continues to maintain quite confidently that her attacker had no scar. A few minutes later, she is shown a photo line-up that includes the suspect. In this way, the police have unintentionally planted the idea in the victim's mind that the rapist may have had a scar. Unless every person in the line-up has a scar, the victim will naturally pay greater attention to the man with the scar. After all, the police would not have asked about the scar if they had not been pretty sure that this man was the rapist.

The victim might still not be sure. A few days later, the police ask her to come in again to view another line-up, which includes the suspect with the scar. This time, as she carefully looks over the line-up, her stomach tightens and she becomes fearful when she sees the scar-faced suspect. He seems so familiar. She begins to doubt her own story, and considers the possibility that the rapist did have a scar after all. Soon she is telling the police that he might be the suspect after all. By the time of the trial, she has completely forgotten her initial disavowal of a scar. On the witness stand, she points with considerable confidence to the suspect as the man who raped her, and now even remembers the scar.

The level of confidence with which a witness tells his or her story is a powerful persuader. The actual factuality of a story is practically irrelevant, Loftus explains:

> Like most people, jurors tend to believe [that] there is a strong relationship between how confident a witness is and how accurate he or she is. A witness who says "Yes, that is absolutely, positively the man I saw" would clearly be more convincing than someone who says "Well, yeah, I think that's the guy." (p. 170)

Loftus relates the case of a young woman who positively identified an innocent man as her rapist. It was only after he was convicted, and the real rapist was found, that she suddenly realized that she had helped convict an innocent man. She had firmly believed her own false testimony, and so had the jury.

As Loftus explains, we are so willing to accept unreliable eyewitness accounts because we do not understand how memory actually works. Most people believe the "video camera" scenario instead of the "evolutionary" scenario. Because of this misconception we are very strongly inclined to believe eyewitness accounts. In general, our memory serves us well. In most cases, it is not crucially important that we remember specific details with a high level of accuracy.

Generalized memories, even if distorted, tend not to matter a great deal except, as Loftus points out, in a court of law where someone's life or liberty may be at stake. The danger of eyewitness testimony is clear:

> Anyone in the world can be convicted of a crime he or she did not commit, or deprived of an award that is due, based solely on the evidence of a witness who convinces the jury that his memory about what he saw is correct. Why is eyewitness testimony so powerful and convincing? Because people in general and jurors in particular believe that our memories stamp the facts of our experiences on a permanent, nonerasable tape, like a computer disk or videotape that is write-protected. For the most part, of course, our memories serve us reasonably well. But how often is precise memory demanded of us? When a friend describes a vacation, we don't ask, "Are you sure your hotel room had two chairs, not three?" . . . But precise memory suddenly becomes crucial in the event of a crime or an accident. Small details assume enormous importance. (p. 21)

In *Witness for the Defense*, Loftus recounts her personal involvement in numerous criminal cases, including the trial of serial killer Ted Bundy. She has testified in cases of murder, rape, and child abuse. In each criminal case dealt with here, she tells the story of her trial testimony. That is, with one notable exception: in the case of John Demjanjuk, she tells why she ultimately refused to testify.

Demjanjuk had been deported from the United States to Israel, where he was on trial for his life. He was accused (and eventually found guilty) of being a "Nazi war criminal" who

helped murder hundreds of thousands of Jews in the German wartime camp of Treblinka. In 1987 Loftus received a phone call from Mark O'Connor, Demjanjuk's attorney, asking her to testify for the defense. If anyone could authoritatively explain just how unreliable an "eyewitness" can be, especially after 35 years, it was Dr. Loftus. Nevertheless, she didn't hesitate to reject O'Connor's plea: "I have three other cases right now. I have classes to teach. And I'm Jewish (p. 211)."

O'Connor refused to accept this answer. He flew across the country to meet Loftus in person, and spent two days going over the evidence of the case with her. Loftus recounts the evidence he presented to her, and in doing so makes a persuasive case for Demjanjuk's innocence. The prosecution's only piece of documentary evidence, a photocopy of an identification card supplied by the Soviets, may well have been a forgery, she relates. For one thing, vital bits of information were missing from the document.

She also tells how Israeli authorities found the "eyewitnesses" who were so important in their case. Israeli officials had placed advertisements in newspapers "asking Treblinka and Sobibor survivors to contact them. O'Connor pulled a sheet of paper from a file and read the advertisement to me: 'The Nazi Crime Investigation Division is conducting an investigation against the Ukrainians Ivan Demjanjuk and Fedor Fedorenko (p. 216).'" Already the testimony of potential witnesses was corrupted by this advertisement. By giving the names of the suspects, it naturally encouraged prospective "eyewitnesses" to modify their memories to incorporate this new information.

It wasn't long before "eyewitnesses" began lining up to help convict these two Ukrainians. At first, their memories were faulty, and some were not at all sure of themselves. Abraham Goldfarb, for example, first testified that Demjanjuk looked "familiar." But after further questioning by Israeli authorities, he suddenly "remembered" that Ivan Demjanjuk was the Treblinka guard known as "Ivan the Terrible."

Goldfarb's testimony was the first to place Demjanjuk at Treblinka. But, as Loftus notes:

> Mr. Goldfarb must have been shocked by his tentative identification of Ivan, O'Connor explained, because in a memoir published right after the war he'd written that Ivan ["the Terrible"] was killed in the 1943 uprising. Goldfarb's

> identification must have shocked the Israeli investigators too, because they had been told by the U.S. government that Ivan was at Sobibor, not Treblinka. (p. 217)

When another "eyewitness," Eugen Turowski, was first questioned, he recognized Fedorenko but not Demjanjuk. However, when Turowski returned the next day for further questioning, and was again shown the photos, he announced that the picture of Demjanjuk was that of "Ivan the Terrible," the Treblinka sadist.

> Why, O'Connor asked me, did Turowski recognize Ivan immediately and with full assurance, when the day before he didn't recognize him at all? Isn't it reasonable to assume that because Goldfarb and Turowski knew each other, and because they testified within hours of each other, they talked about this astonishing discovery: Ivan is still alive! (p. 218)

Loftus goes on to relate:

> The next positive identifications were obtained in September and October 1976—at least four months after Turowski, Goldfarb and Rosenberg testified, and only a month or two after the August reunion of Treblinka survivors held every year in Tel Aviv on the anniversary of the uprising. All the witnesses who identified Demjanjuk lived in Israel and attended that reunion. (p. 219)

In all, just five witnesses identified Demjanjuk as "Ivan the Terrible." At least 23 former Treblinka inmates failed to identify him.

Loftus was confronted with a dilemma. She was one of the world's leading authorities on the crucial aspect of human memory and eyewitness accounts. She knew from her own research and experience that Israeli methods were corrupting the testimony of their witnesses, and that the evidence presented by the Israelis was emphatically not enough to convict Demjanjuk beyond a "reasonable doubt." An innocent man's life was a stake. She had been willing to testify on behalf of accused murderers, rapists and child molesters. Was the case of this Ukrainian immigrant and retired auto worker really any different?

> On the outside, assessing the facts, taking notes, asking detailed questions, was Dr. Elizabeth Loftus, professor at the University of Washington and expert witness in hundreds of court cases. She wanted to say, "Yes, of course I'll take the case." The Israeli police interrogation practices were, indeed,

> questionable, and the prosecution was depending on memories that were thirty-five years old. If these memories were to be believed, and John Demjanjuk was found guilty, he would be sentenced to death. It was a case that cried out for expert testimony. (p. 222)

Recalling her feelings as she grappled with this dilemma, Loftus confesses:

> The file should have convinced me. A case that relied on thirty-five-year-old memories should have been enough by itself. Add to those decaying memories the fact that the witnesses knew before they looked at the photographs that the police had a suspect, and they were even given the suspect's first and last name—Ivan Demjanjuk. Add to that scenario the fact that the Israeli investigators asked the witnesses if they could identify John Demjanjuk, a clearly prejudicial and leading question. Add to that the fact that the witnesses almost certainly talked about their identification afterward, possibly contaminating subsequent identifications. Add to that the repeated showing of John Demjanjuk's photograph so that with each exposure, his face became more and more familiar and the witnesses became more and more confident and convincing.
>
> Then factor into all of the above the intensely emotional nature of this particular case, for the man these people were identifying was more than a tool of the Nazis, more, even, than the dreaded Ivan who ran the diesel engines and tortured and mutilated prisoners. This man, if he was Ivan the Terrible, was personally responsible for murdering their mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, wives, children.
>
> Dr. Loftus would have stopped with the file. She would have added up all the factors, assessed the problems, calculated the numerous possibilities for error and responded, "Yes, of course, I'll testify about the general workings of memory, and discuss how and why it can fail."
>
> But Beth Fishman [Loftus' maiden name] couldn't stop with the file. (p.224)

In the end, Loftus decided not to testify on behalf of a man she believed was very possibly innocent because she didn't want to offend her relatives, her friends, Jewish survivors and Jews everywhere. In short, as she acknowledges, Loftus put her Jewishness ahead of her regard for truth and justice.

> "If I take the case," I explained, having talked this out with myself hundreds of times, "I would turn my back on my Jewish heritage. If I don't take the case, I would turn my back on

everything I've worked for in the last fifteen years. To be true to my work, I must judge the case as I have judged every case before it. If there are problems with the eyewitness identifications I must testify. It's the consistent thing to do." p. 232)

Loftus recounts an exchange with one of her closest friends, who is also Jewish:

"Ilene, I need your advice," I said when we were seated at a booth in a back corner of the restaurant. "A lawyer called a few weeks ago and asked me to testify in the John Demjanjuk trial in Israel."

"Demjanjuk," she said, looking at me. Her voice changed, becoming flat, emotionless. "You mean Ivan the Terrible."

"He is accused of being Ivan the Terrible," I said.

"Beth, please. Tell me you said no. Tell me you will not take this case."

"This lawyer came to see me. He flew out from New York and spent two days with me, trying to convince me that this is a case of mistaken indentification. He believes Demjanjuk is innocent."

"He's being paid by the man, is he not?"

"I told him I'd review the file."

"How could you?" I felt the words, so heavy with contempt, settle like a stone in my heart.

"Ilene, please try to understand. This is my work. I have to look beyond the emotions, to the issues here. I can't just automatically assume he's guilty."

"He *is* guilty. People who were at the death camp, people who watched him, who *knew* him have pointed their fingers at him and said positively and with no hesitation—*That's Ivan.*'"

"You've made up your mind that he's guilty before he's even had a trial," I said.

"Are you telling me that you would do that, Beth?"

We argued through lunch, and when we walked into the psychology building for our 1:30 p.m. classes, Ilene wasn't speaking to me. I watched her walk down the hallway, her back straight and stiff, and I knew that in her heart she believed I had betrayed her. Worse than that, much worse, I had betrayed my people, my heritage, my race. I had betrayed them all for thinking that there might be a possibility that John Demjanjuk was innocent.(p. 228-229)

Loftus struggled with her dilemma. Would she betray her sense of honor and integrity out of loyalty to her "heritage" and "race"? She sought advice from a close relative: "Uncle Joe

tried to be reasonable. He cautioned that I must think about Israel, for 'what is good for Israel is paramount (p. 229).'"

Loftus went to Israel to sit in on the Demjanjuk trial and see the defendant for herself. She recalls how, when one eyewitness "pointed out Demjanjuk, many of the five hundred spectators stood up and applauded," as if watching some great play (p. 230). She heard "eyewitness" Gustave Boraks identify Demjanjuk, but then have trouble remembering the name of his own child. Boraks, who had come to Israel from Florida, was asked if he could remember how he had made the journey. He told the stunned audience that he had come "by train (p. 230)."

Instead of feeling sympathy for the hapless defendant, Loftus empathized with the eyewitnesses, who were doing everything in their power to send Demjanjuk to the gallows:

> I could picture O'Connor stalking Gustave Boraks' aging memory, pouncing, holding it up like a deflated rubber ball and declaring with a victor's smile, "See this old thing? It's no good anymore!" And I could picture Mr. Boraks sitting there defeated and devastated as he watched his mind being held up to ridicule, as he endured the shame of forgetting the name of his youngest son. (p. 231)

As Loftus sat in the courtroom watching the trial, a friend asked her, "Why aren't you up on the stand?" She paused a moment before replying:

> It took me a few seconds to pull my answer together. As I looked around the audience filled with four generations of Jews—little children, their parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents—I tried to explain to Margreet that it was as if these were my relatives, and I, too, had lost someone I loved in the Treblinka death camp. With those kinds of feelings inside me, I couldn't suddenly switch roles and become a professional, an expert . . . I could not have taken the stand and talked about the fallibility of memory without every person in that audience believing that I was indicting the specific memories of the survivors. I would have been perceived as attacking their memories. I couldn't do it. It was as simple and agonizing as that. (p. 237)

In other words, Loftus put her sense of Jewishness above considerations of truth and justice, and above John Demjanjuk's right to a fair trial. In the end, she heeded her uncle's advice and put "Israel" first.

In American trials of murderers and child abusers, Loftus had been quite willing to call into question the memories of the many victims, and to put her sense of professional duty above any concern she might have for their feelings. But she could not bring herself to similarly challenge the dubious memories of Jewish witnesses—because they were Jewish.

By refusing to testify, and thereby passively helping to sentence a man to death whom she herself believed was very possibly innocent, Loftus is perhaps more culpable than the elderly persons who bore false witness against the defendant. For unlike the aging witnesses who were no longer able to distinguish truth from falsehood, and who had come to believe their own false testimony, Loftus knew better.

Many readers of this book will doubtless sympathize with or even approve of Loftus's decision not to testify in the Demjanjuk trial. But how many of these "understanding" readers would be as tolerant of Ukrainians, Poles or other non-Jews who might make similarly ethnically-motivated decisions?

This is a valuable and eye-opening book, not just for the revealing story of one person's crisis of conscience, but for what it teaches about the fallibility of supposedly solid "eyewitness" testimony—a lesson with important social import.

(*continued from page 176*)

share of attention in the production, it's only fitting that he be allowed to set the legal and historical record straight, as he does in his punchy review.

As even J.-C. Pressac, for all his exploitation of blueprints, sketches, and other technical documents on the so-called gas chambers, is constrained to admit, *eyewitness testimony* remains the *sine qua non* of the Holocaust myth. That is why the starting point for Revisionist inquiry, from Paul Rassinier on, has been the careful examination of the claims and accusations of self-proclaimed eyewitnesses to gassing. John Cobden offers a careful review of a book by one of America's leading experts on the frailties and inconsistencies of human memory, psychologist Elizabeth Loftus, who has many times given expert court testimony on memory's limitations. Cobden draws the full implications from Dr. Loftus's awareness of the frailty of the "eyewitness" testimony against John Demjanjuk, her recognition of clear evidence that eyewitness

identification of Demjanjuk was fabricated with the help of Israeli authorities, and her frank admission that her disheartening refusal to aid the Demjanjuk defense was based on tribal loyalties at the expense of justice and truth.

Professor Arthur Butz, whose brilliant *Hoax of the Twentieth Century* has defined the shape of Holocaust Revisionism since its appearance in 1976, returns to the pages of the *JHR* with a succinct restatement of his book's thesis. Butz's article first appeared in the *Daily Northwestern*, a student newspaper of the university at which he is a tenured professor.

This issue of *The Journal* concludes with Robert Faurisson's call for additional information on the first known precursor of the gas extermination accusation of the Second World War, the Allied claim that the Austrians and Bulgarians had gassed some 700,000 Serbs as of March 1916. Study of this little-known, and scarcely studied, atrocity story may open an important new front against its evident successor, particularly since it is known that all sides in the Serbian campaign took strenuous measures to contain and combat a typhus epidemic that broke out in Serbia in 1915.

* * * * *

Last issue we promised in this space to have *The Journal* back on schedule with this issue. Regrettably we have not succeeded, and have even lost another week or two.

Although we shall redouble our efforts to bring you the next (Fall) issue of the *JHR* in a timely fashion, we cannot promise that it will be back on schedule: the exigencies of the Mermelstein trial, which is scheduled to begin August 9, and which will demand full-time attention from the staff of the IHR, will make that impossible. Look for the Winter issue of the *JHR*, which, barring the necessity of an appeal, will contain a comprehensive report on the trial, to be in your hands, on schedule once again, around Christmas or New Year's Day.

—Theodore J. O'Keefe

A Brief Introduction to Holocaust Revisionism

ARTHUR R. BUTZ

Dr. Arthur R. Butz is an associate professor of electrical engineering at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. He is also the author of a major Revisionist study of the alleged Holocaust, The Hoax of the Twentieth Century, *as well as a member of the IHR* Journal's *editorial advisory committee. Earlier this year, as Revisionist attempts to spark open debate on the Holocaust ignited controversy at Northwestern, Butz once again found himself in the center of the storm. (For more on this, including the key role played by IHR media project director Bradley Smith, see the May and July 1991 issues of the* IHR Newsletter.) *At the height of the controversy, Butz presented his view of the Holocaust story in a succinct essay that appeared in the school paper,* The Daily Northwestern, *May 13, 1991, under the title "A Short Introduction to the Study of Holocaust Revisionism." Here is the complete text of his piece, which includes a correction of an error that appeared in the* Daily Northwestern *version:*

I see three principal reasons for the widespread but erroneous belief in the legend of millions of Jews killed by the Germans during World War II: U.S. and British troops found horrible piles of corpses in the West German camps they captured in 1945 (e.g. Dachau and Belsen); there are no longer large communities of Jews in Poland; and historians generally support the legend.

During both world wars, Germany was forced to fight typhus, carried by lice in the constant traffic with the East. That is why all accounts of entry into the German concentration camps speak of shaving of hair and showering and other delousing procedures, such as treatment of quarters

with the pesticide Zyklon. That was also the main reason for a high death rate in the camps, and for the crematoria that existed in all.

When Germany collapsed in chaos, then of course all such defenses ceased, and typhus and other diseases became rampant in the camps, which quartered mainly political prisoners, ordinary criminals, homosexuals, conscientious objectors and Jews conscripted for labor. Hence the horrible scenes, which however had nothing to do with "extermination" or any deliberate policy. Moreover, the West German camps involved were not the alleged "extermination camps," which were all in Poland (e.g. Auschwitz and Treblinka) and which were all evacuated or shut down before capture by the Soviets, who found no such scenes.

The "Final Solution" spoken of in the German documents was a program of evacuation, resettlement and deportation of Jews with the ultimate objective of expulsion from Europe. During the war Jews of various nationalities were being moved east, as one stage in this Final Solution. The legend claims that the motion was mainly for extermination purposes.

The great majority of the millions allegedly exterminated were East European—not German or West European—Jews. For that reason study of the problem via population statistics has been difficult to impossible, but it is a fact that there are no longer large communities of Jews in Poland. However, the Germans were only one of several parties involved in moving Jews around. The Soviets deported virtually all of the Jews of eastern Poland to their interior in 1940. After the war, with Polish and other Jews pouring out of the East into occupied West Germany, the Zionists moved large numbers to Palestine, and the United States and other countries absorbed many Jews, in most cases under conditions making impossible a numerical accounting. Moreover, the Polish borders were changed drastically at the end of the war; the country was literally moved west.

Historians generally support the legend, but there are precedents for nearly incomprehensible blindness on the part of scholars. For example, throughout the Middle Ages even the Pope's political enemies conceded his false claim that the 4th century Emperor Constantine had ceded rule of the west to the Pope, although all knew very well that Constantine had

been succeeded by more emperors. Near unanimity among the academics is especially suspect when there exist great political pressures; in some countries, Holocaust Revisionists have been prosecuted.

It is easy to show that the extermination legend merits skepticism. Even the casual reader of the Holocaust literature knows that during the war virtually nobody acted as though it were happening. Thus it is common to berate the Vatican, the Red Cross and the Allies (especially the intelligence agencies) for their ignorance and inaction, and to explain that the Jews generally did not resist deportation because they did not know what was in store for them. If you add all this up you have the strange claim that for almost three years German trains, operating on a continental scale in densely civilized regions of Europe, were regularly and systematically moving millions of Jews to their deaths, and nobody noticed except for a few of our Jewish leaders who were making public "extermination" claims.

On closer examination even those few Jewish leaders were not acting as though it were happening. Ordinary communications between the occupied and neutral countries were open, and they were in contact with the Jews whom the Germans were deporting, who thus could not have been in ignorance of "extermination" if those claims had any validity.

This incredible ignorance must also be attributed to Hans Oster's department in German military intelligence, correctly labeled "the veritable general staff of the opposition to Hitler" in a recent review.

What we are offered in evidence was gathered after the war, in trials. The evidence is almost all oral testimony and "confessions." Without the evidence of these trials there would be no significant evidence of "extermination." One must pause and ponder this carefully. Were trials needed to determine that the Battle of Waterloo happened? The bombings of Hamburg, Dresden, Hiroshima and Nagasaki? The slaughter in Cambodia? Yet this three-year program, of continental scope, claiming millions of victims, requires trials to argue its reality. I am not arguing that the trials were illegal or unfair; I am arguing that such historical logic as the legend rests on must not be countenanced. Such events cannot happen without generating commensurate and contemporaneous evidence for their reality, just as a great forest fire cannot take place without producing smoke. One may as well believe that

New York City was burned down, if confessions to the deed can be produced.

Detailed consideration of the specific evidence put forward in support of the legend has been a focus of the Revisionist literature and cannot be undertaken here, but I shall mention one point. The claim of the legend is that there were no technical means provided for the specific task of extermination, and that means originally provided for other purposes did double duty in improvised arrangements. Thus the Jews were allegedly gassed with the pesticide Zyklon, and their corpses disappeared into the crematoria along with the deaths from "ordinary" causes (the ashes or other remains of millions of victims never having been found).

Surely any thoughtful person must be skeptical.

A Request for Additional Information on the Myth of the "Gassing" of the Serbs in the First World War

ROBERT FAURISSON

The myth of the "gassing" of the Jews during the Second World War is only a recurrence—or a recycling—of a myth from the First World War: that of the "gassing" of Serbs by the Germans, the Austrians, and the Bulgarians.

On March 22, 1916, the *London Daily Telegaph* printed, on its page 7, the following article:

ATROCITIES IN SERBIA

700,000 VICTIMS

ROME, Monday (6:45 p.m.).

The Governments of the Allies have secured evidence and documents, which will shortly be published, proving that Austria and Bulgaria have been guilty of horrible crimes in Serbia, where the massacres committed were worse than those perpetrated by Turkey in Armenia.

The Italian government has today published the testimony of two Italian prisoners who escaped from Austria through Serbia, and took refuge in Romania. What these two prisoners

> saw and learned, however, was nothing compared with the evidence supplied by the Serbians themselves, and communicated by M. Pasitch to the Italian Government and to the Pope. According to reliable information, the victims of the Austrians and Bulgarians exceeded 700,000. Whole districts, with towns and villages, have been depopulated by massacres. Women, childen, and old men were shut up in the churches by the Austrians, and either stabbed with the bayonet or suffocated by means of asphyxiating gas. In one church in Belgrade 3,000 women, children, and old men were thus suffocated.
>
> Serbian refugees, not on oath, have stated that they were present at a distribution of bombs and machines for producing asphyxiating gas to the Bulgarians by the Germans and Austrians, who instructed the former how to utilize these instruments to exterminate the Serbian population. The Bulgarians used this method at Nish, Pirot, Prizrend and Negotin, the inhabitants of which places died of suffocation. Similar means were employed by the Austrians in several parts of Montenegro.

On June 25, 1942 the same newspaper went on to publish, on its page 5, a comparable article under the following title:

GERMANS MURDER 700,000 JEWS IN POLAND
TRAVELLING GAS CHAMBERS

During the First World War, Bernhard Guttmann was "correspondent and contributor to the *Frankfurter Zeitung*." On November 20, 1917 he met in Berlin with Richard von Kühlmann, state secretary in the Foreign Office. R. von Kühlmann informed Guttmann of his pessimism as to the progress and the outcome of the war. He complained of the behavior of the Bulgarians, who were allied to Germany and Austria:

> [State Secretary von Kühlmann] reported how the Serbs are being "finished off" by them [the Bulgarians] with bureaucratic dispatch; they are brought, ostensibly to be cleaned, to delousing stations and eliminated with gas [*Schattenriss einer Generation (1888-1919)*, Stuttgart: K.F. Köhler Verlag, 1950, p. 145-146].

I am seeking help from *JHR* readers able to provide additional information on this myth from the First World War, particularly in the form of research into contemporary press reports. Information might also be sought from the cultural services of Yugoslavia's embassies, consulates, and other agencies.

About the Contributors

ENRIQUE AYNAT, a Spaniard, is the author of *El Diario ABC y El Holocausto*, a study of Spain's leading daily newspaper's wartime coverage of the "Holocaust," and *Los "Protocolos de Auschwitz": ¿Una Fuente Historica?* (The "Auschwitz Protocols": A Historical Source?), an important study of the first detailed allegations of homicidal gassings at Auschwitz.

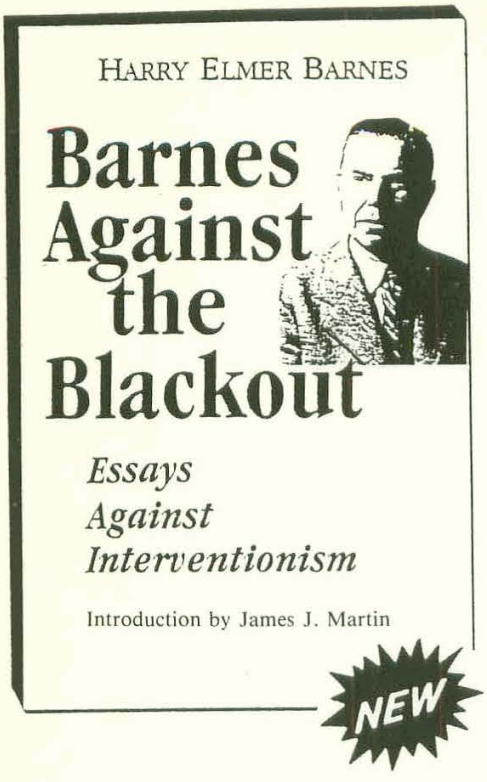
ARTHUR R. BUTZ is Associate Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences at Northwestern University. He is the author of *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century.*

JOHN COBDEN is the pseudonym of an American writer on politics. His articles have appeared in numerous national magazines and major newspapers, including the *Hartford Courant*, the *Oakland Tribune*, and the *Orange County Register.* A French translation of Cobden's "Lessons from Dachau," which appeared in the Winter 1989-90 *JHR*, has recently appeared in the *Revue d'Histoire Révisionniste.*

ROBERT FAURISSON'S pathbreaking research on the "problem of the gas chambers" and his determination to publicize his findings led to his conviction last April under a French law enacted specifically to ban questioning the homicidal gas chambers of the Second World War. Professor Faurisson, who was deprived of his tenure at the University of Lyon-2 by government fiat, specializes in the evaluation of texts and documents. A frequent contributor to *The Journal of Historical Review*, Professor Faurisson has published numerous articles and books, including *Is the Diary of Anne Frank Genuine?* and *Réponse à Pierre Vidal-Naquet.* His forthcoming collection, *Faurisson on the Holocaust*, will be available from the IHR this year.

THOMAS J. MARCELLUS, a former editor of this journal, is director of the Institute for Historical Review.

MARK WEBER studied history at the University of Illinois (Chicago), the University of Munich, Portland State University (B.A., 1976), and Indiana University (M.A., 1977). He has published many articles on Revisionist subjects in *The Journal of Historical Review* and elsewhere, and is currently working on a major Revisionist study of the Holocaust story.



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